STUDIES IN

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

In Indian Schools

VISHWANATH SAHAI MATHUR

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BY

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TO

MY FATHER

IN FILIAL AFFECTION AND ESTEEM

PREFACE

Most of these studies now presented in a book form were originally written as individual papers and contributed to the various educational journals of the country. Some new material, however, has been added which, it is hoped, will enhance the usefulness of the book for the teachers and students in Training Colleges.

I owe my interest in the Teaching of English mainly to the inspiring influence of Mrs. Verghese of the Training College, Ajmer when I was also on the staff of that college; although I admit that in return I completely failed to make her interested in Geography which is my main subject. I started studying the methods of teaching English to Indian students as a hobby and she was responsible for turning it into a craze.

I also owe a deep debt of gratitude to Principal Habibur Rahman (now Principal of the Training College, Aligarh). I started my career as Lecturer in Education at Ajmer under him. Incidentally his subject is also English and I gained so much from his masterly talks. Though, as my principal, he used to 'order' me to devote more time to my own subject, I hope, when he sees this small book he will not grudge giving it his blessings and forgiving my past 'insubordination.'

I am also grateful to my present Principal, Mr. E. C. Dickinson M. A. (Oxon) for kindly going through the manuscript of the book. I was greatly encouraged by his appreciation of the work.

To my friend and colleague Dharm (D. P. Gupta of the Government College) my thanks are due for arranging the publication of the book. He also undertook the laborious task of helping me to see the book through the press. It is due to him that the get-up of the book is so much better than that of many other books of the present dreadful post-war period. He is also responsible for correcting many errors in expression, a fact that should enhance the value of the book.

In spite of the help received from kind friends I am fully conscious of the many shortcomings in the book both in expression and in facts for which I crave the indulgence of the reader.

Lahore, Sept. 10, 1946. V. S. MATHUR

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3. *The Educational Review*—Dictation Exercises.

4. *The South India Teacher*—Correction of Written Work.

5. *Educational India*—(*a*) Teaching of English Prose and Poetry. (*b*) Teaching of English Grammar.

6. *Northern India Observer*—(*a*) Development of Literary Appreciation. (*b*) General English.

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INTRODUCTION

Why are we shy of English ?

"While it is no longer the ambition of any Indian that he will achieve eminence as a writer of English, yet our debt to it is incalculable in its contribution to the development of our sense of nationhood. The ideas of freedom, of responsible government, of democracy, were all derived from the writings of Burke, Godwin, Mill, Shelley, Swinburne, Macaulay, and others whose writings are an expression of faith in progress, in advance, and in the ultimate triumph of freedom's battle. In the use—or misuse—of English all Indians are at an equal advantage or disadvantage. No Madrasi need be in danger of being ridiculed by the natives of Delhi and Lucknow ; no Bengali need fear his ignorance of the gender."—*Amar Nath Jha.*

The problem of a national language for India has long been the subject of an acute controversy in the country. That we do require a common language cannot be denied. But the baffling point to be decided is that which of the 179 of our languages (and 544 dialects) is suitable for the general masses. A simpler form of Hindi or Urdu usually called *Hindustani* is quite widely understood with slight and sometimes marked variations in pronunciation, gender and even tense in the different parts of the country. Urdu and Hindi are also quite widely used for literary and even linguistic purposes. These two languages have common basic words, and our leaders wish and call this group of common words as *Hindustani*, the proposed national language although it is yet sadly incomplete.

The Urdu-Hindi controversy has taken a serious comunal turn and I am sure that there is as yet no ready-made solution of the problem. The gulf between the two major communities is already quite wide and the pressing of the controversy any further only means widening it further. Many people, out of sheer helplessness, have focussed their attention on *Hindustani* as the best possible solution of the

unpleasant problem. What is Hindustani? I have yet to come across a convincing answer, in spite of the enormous work done in this direction. The All India Radio seem to have taken a definite step in this direction, but a regular listener can easily defeat this claim. In their zeal to use simple words, the editors and the translators often bring forth strange and meaningless expressions. Not long ago the news announcer wanted to say that "the British Delegation's proposals are quite flexible" and he read out

انگریزی مشن کی تجویزیں کافی لچکدار ہیں

The word لچکدار does not give the required meaning at all. I could extensively multiply the examples. Then there is the question of the script !

In the world of to-day one cannot afford to be an 'isolationist'. Commercial, political, social and cultural relations with the outside world must be maintained, and for this one must learn a foreign language ; and why not English which has now undoubtedly assumed the shape of an all-world language. This means that an average Indian must learn (1) the mother-tongue (2) the all-India language (say Hindustani) and (3) a foreign language preferably English. This burden might be too much for a slender school child.

My thesis is that if we skip off No. 2 and learn No. 1 and No. 3, our position may not be so very complex. We cannot easily deny that if the English have given us anything useful, it is the English language. That at least has enabled some of us to converse with one another and thus a sort of linguistic unity, so far unknown in the history of the country, has evolved. Then why are we shy of English ? Because perhaps it comes to us from foreigners. If our patriotism is to pass through such narrow channels, then perhaps our leaders will also ask us to abandon the use of motor-cars, the radio and practically of all the amenities of modern life because they also came from without the country.

Under the circumstances, therefore, it seems only useful and necessary to me that English be widely studied in India both because of its all-India and global importance and also "for its own sake." Doing so, however, need not in

any way decry the importance of the individual's mother-tongue.

It is only common sense that, sentiments apart, Hindustani is as yet non-existent. I believe that only Hindi and Urdu are complete languages. Hindustani is the name given to some common words used in both The number of such words is very small and if no help is taken from Persian or Sanskrit words, expression will be incomplete and shoddy. Lovers of Urdu say 'use Persian words', while the lovers of Hindi say 'use Sanskrit words'. The remedy is to use none and concoct new words —a task which is well nigh impossible specially if Hindustani is to be made a complete language and a language in the popular sense. It will be a sad day for India when a new 'artificial language' with an obscure identity, an unsettled nomenclature and practically no literature is forced upon us as a 'national language'. And then there is the ever-troubling question of script ! as such English is the only solution.

If we are to adopt English as our 'national language' we must use standard English. I give no place to Basic English which in spite of its good points cannot be called a 'complete' language. It is only a short cut—and a very short one as that.

I feel that the standard reached at the Matriculation stage is usually sufficient for all practical purposes and both the mother-tongue and English be compulsorily studied upto this stage as a combined subject called 'Languages'. After this English literature be studied as an optional subject just like Economics, Politics or Chemistry. But in no case English should be abandoned. I heartily subscribe to the view that the mother-tongue should be the medium of instruction and not English, but English as a compulsory subject does deserve a respectable place in our school curriculum just as is the case in a number of foreign countries.

It is bad patriotism to be narrow-minded and wrongly sentimental. It is sometimes useful to borrow from others what we can use with advantage because, I believe, without such a healthy spirit civilization cannot move on.

CHAPTER ONE

TEACHIMG TO READ

Prior to a consideration of the various methods of teaching the children to read, it is but proper to consider what is really meant by 'reading'. Is reading a mere vocal reproduction of written or printed symbols called ' words' without understanding their import, or is it an oral expression of the thought symbolised in the printed or written passages, from which reading is made, by means of word-symbols ?

Scientifically considered, words are (as described by Mr. H. Dippie in his book, " Suggestions for Primary School Teachers in India") like bottles and contain ideas just as bottles contain medicines. The thing that is important for us in ' words' is the ideas that they embody and not their sounds or shapes when written or printed. "They only exist for what they contain." Now ideas are present in minds, and man wishes to convey his ideas to others. In order to do this he has to use symbols which he has devised and which he calls 'words.' The ideas must, therefore, be considered clothed in words and the words are presented to another person. Now they can be presented in two ways, either by speaking or by writing them down. "These words can be spoken or written—this is the art of expression. Words spoken or written can be heard or read by others and the whole of this process of looking at words with the eyes and *then turning the words back into ideas* is known as reading."

Mr. Dippie also gives a diagram in his book just below the words quoted above and as it serves to illustrate very clearly the process of reading that he has described, I take the liberty to reproduce it below :—

Ideas—Words { Spoken-Hearing-Understanding
Written-Seeing-Understanding } Ideas.

Reading

The most important thing to note here is that complete reading implies turning the heard or seen words into ideas or in other words understanding the meaning of what is read. The best method of teaching reading, therefore, would be what helps, to the greatest extent, in making the students comprehend what they are reading and it is in the light of this principle that we judge the relative value of the three methods mentioned in the body of this essay.

We shall consider below all the methods one by one and examine their respective merits and defects.

1. *The Alphabetic Method* :—This is the oldest method of teaching English-reading to young children as practised both in England and other western countries and also in India. It begins the study of the language with the alphabets and builds upon it. When the children are familiar with the forms and sounds of the letters of the Alphabet they are taught to join them to form simple words. They have thus continual practice in learning the spellings and sounds of new words.

The chief objection against this method is that the learning by rote of the names of the letters of the alphabet does not help the students to form any idea of their phonetical use, that the name of the letters when combined do not give the sound of the words that they make. For example, the combinations of the sounds *pee, o, t* does not give us the pronunciation of the word *pot*, and so it is useless to concentrate on the names of the alphabet. It only forces the young learners to pay attention to the part of words before they come to apprehend the word itself and the thing it denotes as a whole, whereas the course of nature is that the words should be apprehended as a whole before their parts are attended to. In the history of languages too it was the same. Men could talk before they analysed their speech into letters. Language was long precedent to symbols. (Welton, *Principles and Methods of Teaching*).

It is true that for generations men have been learning to read by the Alphabetic methods. But as Welton says, " No child could ever learn to read by that method. He learnt to read in spite of it." The method is, to say the least, lengthy and tedious though the child, unconscious of there being anything wrong with the method, begins heartily at his job of learning the names of the letters of the alphabets and combining them to make words and of learning the new sounds that the words have formed by such combinations.

2. *The Phonic Method* :—To eliminate these defects of the method of teaching to read, another method was designed, known as the Phonic Method, which emphasized the sounds of the letters rather than their names. According to his method the child is first taught the sounds that the letters represent and much emphasis is laid upon the correct production of sounds represented by the different letters. Elaborate rules are compiled with regard to the disposal of the vocal organ in the production of different sounds. Phonetic charts abound in photographs of the external and internal vocal organs as they should be disposed in the articulation of different letters of the alphabet. To the child learning to read by the phonic method, a letter denotes the placing of lips, tongue and teeth in a certain position and breathing so that the sound denoted by the letter is produced automatically as it were. When such movements are undergone with regard to every letter in a word, that word is automatically pronounced. In this way the very word is attacked by *sounding* in succession all the letters of which it is composed thus pronouncing it. In the beginning, each word is pronounced or *deciphered* in this way. In course of time the student acquires facility in combining swiftly the sounds of the different letters and pronouncing the word quickly as a whole. In doing so he is gradually able to pay attention to the form of the word as a whole and its sound when pronounced as a whole. His mind is no longer engrossed in the articulation of separate letters. He is able to connect the general pronunciation of the word with its general form and finally attains to the reading of words as wholes as desired.

It is obvious that such a method of learning to read delays the ability to read words as wholes, which is the only way of reading them properly. Firstly the suggestion of the sound of the whole word by merely looking at the form of it comes later. Then on account of the mind being engaged in *deciphering* letters the suggestion of the meaning of the spoken whole is kept longer in the background.

Another defect of the Phonic Method is its unsuitability to the irregular English spelling. There are no fixed sounds for many of the letters of the English Alphabet and the motley sounds into which the words form themselves defy all attempts at reducing them to some rules or principles. Some attempt is made to get over this difficulty by confining the attention first to words of spelling (regular spelling) and by the use of distinguishing marks or colours to indicate different sound-values of the same letters, but the first limits the field of choice of words to be taught and the second makes the method too elaborate for small children.

The psychological error of considering the parts of a word before considering the whole of it is committed as much by the supporters of the Phonic method as by those who favour the Alphabetic method. If the latter requires the child to pay attention to the parts of the written word, the former makes him too much engrossed in the sounds of single letters, whereas the word as heard by the student in everyday-speech is heard as a whole.

Mr. Dumville considers the use of Phonic method as "a serious check to the development of a love of literature". (Dumville's ; *Teaching—Its nature and theory*). "The words of the early lessons are selected because of their phonetic spelling and the consequent case with which they can be manipulated on phonic lines. But these words are neither the most interesting nor the most common of words of ordinary speech......The motive of reading with the young and, indeed, with many adults is to have access to interesting literature. It is to be feared that much of the edge is taken off the first appetite by presenting to the child in early stages the more or less meaningless tweddle which

is specially manufactured to introduce certain words at their right phonic stage". (Dumville, *The Science of Speech*).

The Phonic Method thus makes an unnatural grouping of words together, and so it presents words to the minds of the students, not in an agreeable variety as they occur in life, but by an artificial selection based on similarity of sound. Words should be grouped together on consideration of sense and not sounds and even where a consideration of sounds is deliberate (as in poetry), it is subordinated to consideration of sense. Thus we have such banal verses in Phonic Readers as the following :—

Pat had a fat rat,
The rat hid in a sack,
Pat ran to the sack,
And got his rat.

Here we see that the contents of the lines are neither usual nor natural. This *naturalness* has been sacrificed to the bringing together of too many words.

3. *The Look-and-Say Method* :—People who think the irregularities of English spelling as too difficult to be reduced to a system and be related consistently to the sounds of words, recommend the *Look-and-Say* Method of teaching as the best alternative. This method makes the children learn the words that are taught to them as wholes and does not analyse them into their component parts in spelling or sound.

In lessons given according to the Look-and-Say Method simple words are written on the black-board. The words are selected not on phonic principles, but according to whether they represent most familiar objects to the children. If the direct method of teaching English is used, then the objects represented by those words are also brought in the room. The teacher shows the objects to the students and the students repeat the words after him. He then points to the written form of the words on the black-board and pronounces it. Thus a simultaneous drill is given to the whole class in pronouncing the words written on the blackboard with a recognition of the objects for which they stand, till the sound and the meaning of all the words is deeply impressed on their minds.

The teacher may or may not show the objects represented by the words to the class (though it is almost indispensable in a good lesson to do so). The main thing which the particular value of the method comes to, is that the students have to *look* at the words and *say* them directly. The words taught in the earlier stages are, as far as possible, similar for similarity helps in learning them quickly.

The greatest advantage of this method is that it makes the word the 'unit' of learning rather than the letter and makes analysis of words follow the learning of them. P. C. Wren calls it, "the one and only rational method" of teaching to read, as it is in accordance with the fundamental principle of education as shown below :—

In adopting it the teacher follows nature ; for in language words come before letters and even the child begins to talk in words before he learns to analyse them into letters.

He is proceeding from the concrete to the abstract as he first takes the actual object, then the word signifying it, and then the symbols that represent the name.

He is teaching inductively as he begins with the facts of language called 'words' and leads the pupils to the laws, underlying words.

He is proceeding from the known to the unknown, as he takes up first the words that the child uses daily in his talk and then goes to the component parts of the words

He is making the teaching interesting and attractive as he is putting before the pupils ideas contained in the words or the simple sentences that he is teaching them instead of such meaningless forms or sounds :— a, b, c, d, or ab, ac, ad, af.

As Wren points out, "By no other method can these principles be adhered to." It is in addition the simplest method (because it is the most natural). "It also eliminates the difficulty of spelling from the other difficulty of reading ...it is the only rational way of teaching such contradictory symbolisations as *bought*, *cough*, *rough*, *yot*, *yacht*, *quay*,

key, see, tea, me and the hundreds of other exceptions, which are more numerous than the accordance, and .....the power of ready recognition of complete words (upon which learnt reading depends), can never be so quickly and thoroughly acquired by any system of teaching letters and syllables."

When so much has been written in commendation of this method, it is only proper to consider the common objections to it.

We are told that this method develops in children the habit of guessing. However distasteful this habit might seem to the method-ridden teacher, in practice it is really a very helpful method ; because we all *guess*. If we miss a word in a talkie film we guess what it could have been, so as not to lose the connected meaning of the story. If a part of a leaf of some book containing some words is torn off we guess what the missing words were and supply them. In written letters and other kinds of manuscripts illegible words are mostly read by means of guessing, and the missing and illegible words (the latter are as good as no words) are supplied from our general knowledge of English and our knowledge of the context. If a child can supply the proper words by guessing, it is a good sign. It shows that he or she has sufficient knowledge of English and has understood the context well.

The objection that this method puts a great strain on the memory for it requires children to remember the sounds of so many words and they have to reproduce it on the presentation of the word to them without any rational clue of any kind whatever, is an over stretched point. When the knowledge of the language of the children increases, clues soon begin to appear. But apart from the clues, the contention that memory is unduly strained is untrue. The mind which can remember the objects which are associated with the sound of the words by which they are denoted, but by which they are not depicted, whenever those sounds are uttered, can also assimilate the sounds of the different words.

Another objection to the method that is commonly made is that if the teaching of reading it to be conducted

in accordance with its principles, spelling is likely to suffer. This has also been contradicted by saying that spelling comes by reading, and that the more a child reads, the more will he see of the correct forms of words and the better will he remember their spelling. And it is the Look-and-Say method that sets the children directly to the reading of words. To the child who has learnt to read by Look and-Say method the word that is mis-spelt looks so at once for the method develops in the learners a kind of 'spelling-sense'. Thus while the Phonic Method of teaching reading gives a few rules of spelling which are so often broken that large supplementary lists have to be crammed in order to cover the whole of the language, the Look-and-Say method creates in the students a faculty for '*sensing*' the correct spelling which resides in the subconscious chambers of his mind and works effortlessly, though effectively.

A great draw-back of this method seems to be that it treats all the thousands of words of the language as independent objects and gives them little chance to observe their similarities and differences, which in itself is a thing of great value to the students of literature. Whatever of such similarities and differences the students really note, are noted haphazardly or just by chance. That is why some exponents of this method modify it by devising exercises in spelling and supplement impressionistic reading of extracts.

Conclusion. None of the above mentioned method is perfect, though the general opinion of the greatest authorities in the educational field is that the Look-and-Say Method is the best for the teaching of Reading, apart from other considerations such as spelling, articulation, etc.

The best method seems to be one in which the benefits of the Look-and-Say Method are supplemented by uses of the Alphabet and Phonic Methods for though those methods may not be perfect for the teaching of the reading of English they are certainly the only ways of dealing with certain essential parts of the art of reading.

CHAPTER TWO

EXPLANATION OF ENGLISH WORDS AND PHRASES

The chief aim underlying the use of all modern devices in the teaching of English Texts is to elicit the meaning of the particular word or the phrase from the students themselves rather than tell them the meaning *directly*. Judiciously employed the effort to elicit meanings from the student seldom fails Yet in some cases the meaning cannot possibly be elicited. The nature of the word or the phrase and the comprehension of the students both count in some cases. In other cases even if the meaning could be elicited it is better to tell it directly. In many cases the direct telling of the meaning of a particular word or phrase impresses the students' minds with its meaning better than the eliciting of its meaning from the students themselves.

There is, however, no contrariety of nature between the elicitive and the non-elicitive devices. Their aims are the same and their methods are similar. Regarded from different points of view a device can be both elicitive and non-elicitive. For example in the lines :—

'Besides the ungathered rice he lay
His sickle in his hand,

suppose the teacher, in order to make the meaning of the word 'sickle' clear to the students either describes the shape and purpose of the sickle, or draws a sickle on the blackboard. Both these devices can be regarded as being non-elicitive as they tell the pupil directly what the thing denoted by the word 'sickle 'actually is They can as well be regarded as elicitive since they help the student to come of himself at the vernacular equivalent of 'sickle' without telling it to him. Even in the case of most happily employed elicitive devices some information is given to the student. The student has to apply that information to skim out the meaning from it. The meaning is already hidden therein.

The question of the use of vernacular in the case of foreign language teaching is mixed up with the question of devices for explaining words and phrases and affects the view that can be taken with regard to the presence or absence of the elicitive quality in any device used. The classification of devices followed in this essay is, therefore, purely arbitrary and is used only for the sake of having some method in the discussion of the subject. The denotations of the elicitive and the non-elicitive devices overlap; boundaries of both are vague and formless and the best that can be said is that a finding of some fault in this classification of devices will only lead to a study of the principles of their classification and may result in a more scientific classification than I have succeeded in evolving.

Classification of Devices

The devices that I am going to consider are therefore elicitive, and those that tell the meaning directly. A third kind is that which serves not to explain the meaning of a word or phrase but to make clearer a meaning which is already vaguely understood. Examples of such devices are comparison and contrast. I shall now take up the different kinds of devices separately.

Detailed Treatment of Devices

These may again be divided into three kinds according to the kind of words or phrases which they explain. They are:—

1. Devices that explain the meaning of words or phrases that denote an object, action or situation, or that qualify actions (e.g. adverbs).

2. Devices that explain the meaning of words or phrases that denote abstract things or qualities.

3. Devices that explain the meaning of words or phrases used as adjectives or of idiomatic phrases

4 Devices that help the students to understand the meaning of peculiar grammatical constructions, figures of speech etc.

Let us consider them one by one.

1. *Devices that explain the meaning of words or phrases that denote an object, action or situation or that qualify actions.—*

The kinds of words and phrases considered in the above heading are such that their assigned meaning can be more easily visualised than comprehended in any other way. The chief device for explaining such words and phrases, therefore, is to help the students to *visualise* the object, action, situation or the manner of action denoted by the word or the phrase that is being explained. This helps the students to form correct mental associations between the word or the phrase in question and its connotation.

This *visualisation* may be actual or only mental. In actual visualisation the actual object embodied in the meaning of the term explained is presented before the eyes of the students. If it is an action, or a manner of action, it can be presented by demonstration. For example, in the sentence " The snail creeps," the word 'creeps' can be explained by demonstrating the motion of any animal in creeping ; as well as in the sentence, " The snail creeps slowly," the quality of slowness of creeping can be demonstrated by moving along the ground very slowly. If, however, it is a situation, it can be dramatised. But some objects, actions, situations and-manners of actions do not allow of such direct representation. An object might be too big to be imported into the class room. It might otherwise admit of no change of place or it might be extremely difficult to bring it in the class. A tree from the Himalayas or a tiger are, for example, impossible to be brought in the class-room. An action on its part may be on too big a scale to be demonstrated by the teacher, for example, a stampede of elephant could never *condiguly* be imitated by the teacher. As to the manner of actions one example might suffice. The teacher could not demonstrate the swiftness of the speed of an aeroplane. Situations also might be too complex and on too large a scale to be dramatised in the class-room. The teacher should therefore explain the words or phrases that admit of meanings which cannot be directly or physically visualised by making the students visualise the meanings of these words or phrases

mentally. This can be done by a description of the object, action the manner of its being performed—or situation that the teacher wants the students to visualise. Objects may be represented by means of description or by showing pictures of them to the students ; for showing pictures is description by means of lines and colours of what one can describe by means of words and phrases. If suitable pictures are not at hand, the teacher can draw sketches or diagrams of the things he wants to present to his students on the blackboard.

So the chief devices for helping the students to a physical visualisation are Presentation of the objects before them, Demonstration, Dramatisation; and the chief device for mental visualisation is Description, whether by words or pictures or sketches.

2. *Devices that explain the meaning of words or phrases that denote abstract things or qualities.*—

It is clear that abstract things or qualities cannot be visualised. They can best be apprehended by considering examples of them. For example, in order to help the children to understand the meaning of *virtue*, what could be better than to relate to them the story of a virtuous man exercising his virtues and to tell them afterwards this man possessed virtue ? Or in order to make them understand sacrifice, what could be better than to tell them some story of sacrifice such as the story of Florence Nightingale ? Such examples illustrate what no verbal meanings can do, the composite quality of virtues, and serve to impress the idea conveyed by the words or phrases explained more clearly than any other device could do. The giving of examples is, however, a lengthy device and takes up a great deal of time of the teacher. It should not, therefore, be used indiscriminately, in such profuseness as to hamper progress.

The chief device for making the students learn the meanings of words or phrases denoting abstract things or qualities we will call, therefore, as the giving of examples or exemplification.

3. *Devices that explain the meaning of words or phrases used as adjective or of idiomatic phrase.*—

It is also evident that it is wrong to think of the examples of pure adjectives as adjectives or to seek to visualise them, to think of any example of 'bold' or to wish to visualise it for example. The sense of such words can best be made clear by showing the example of their similar usage in other sentences. For example, in order to teach the meaning of the word 'famous' the teacher might give to the students the sentence "Gandhiji is a famous man of India" and then ask what the meaning of the word can be. Much, however, depends on the sentences thus made.

The meaning of the idiomatic phrases is also best explained by illustration of usage. An idiom standing by itself conveys little sense to the mind. Used in a sentence it assumes meaning which becomes more or less self-evident. One example will suffice. Supposing the teacher in the text, he is teaching, comes across the sentence. "After beating about the bush for four pages the author entered his theme", and instead of explaining its meaning by means of lengthy renderings he gives them the following example of its usage : "Two students quarrel, and the matter goes to the teacher for decision. The teacher calls both the students to him separately and asks them to relate to him the whole thing about their quarrel honestly and faithfully. One of them does not come directly to the point but gives vague round about answers. The teacher says to him "Do not beat about the bush, but come directly to the subject. Tell me everything plainly". Now can you tell me what the meaning of the phrase 'beating about the bush' is ? This example of the use of the phrase will serve to make its meaning clearer to the students than if the teacher explained to them that beating about the bush means talking round about the central subject but not coming to it directly.

4. *Devices that help the students to understand the meaning of peculiar grammatical constitutions, figures of speech, etc.*—

These textual difficulties belong to the highest types in textual difficulties as regards the standard of the class in

which they occur and the complexity of the nature of the difficulty itself. In these cases we come to a discussion of the peculiarities of style and the beauties of it and, therefore, the communication of such matters to the minds of the students requires devices much more subtle than those employed for the difficulties mentioned in the foregoing three sections. The most usual device, and perhaps the best for the purpose too, is the citing of parallel instances of similar constructions, for that communicates to the minds of the students the unitary nature of the peculiarities of constructions of sentences or of embellishments of writing such as the figures of speech, literary or other qualities of writing—a feature that cannot be analysed or explained.

It will be seen that our four kinds of words and phrases are arranged according to the principle of difficulty or complexity. The earlier words and phrases are such as occur in the text-books of students of lower classes. They present simple concepts to the mind. As we proceed the words and phrases that we deal with become more difficult and complex, such as are found in the books prescribed for the higher classes The devices too, which serve to teach their meaning, are accordingly distributed in the teaching of different classes according to the words and phrases with which they deal. In the lower classes the teaching abounds in the devices of presentation of object, and dramatisation of actions or the modeof their performance and demonstration of situation ; while in the higher classes exemplification, illustration of usage or the giving of parallel examples or instances are in more frequent use.

As has already been hinted, it is neither always possible nor always desirable to use the elicitive methods in the explanation of the meaning of words and phrases. Some words and phrases cannot be taught by these methods, and a great deal of time is wasted in trying to elicit the meaning of such words and phrases from the students. The inconvenience of arranging data of information for the students in order to elicit the meaning of any word or phrase from them rather than to tell it himself, is very often forbidding and it takes up a great deal of time of the

teacher in thinking out the device for explaining simple words and phrases and also that of the children in learning them. In actual practice elicitation can surely be overdone and even mis-applied. It is often far better to save the time of the class by telling them the meaning of the word to be explained directly. This leads us to the devices that tell the students the meaning of words or phrases directly.

✓2. Devices that tell the meaning directly :—

The most common of the devices used in telling the meaning of words and phrases directly are the following :—

(1) Substitution.

(2) Definition.

(3) Explanation.

(4) Translation.

We consider each separately below :—

✓1. *Substitution* consists in giving other words having the same meaning. This is the commonest device in the explanation of the meanings of words though an imperfect one, for no two words in any language have exactly the same meaning. A synonym, however close in meaning it may be to the original word, has yet a different meaning from that word and the students who are told nothing but synonyms for the meaning of words in their class fall into the habit of regarding many words in the language as having identical meanings, and use them improperly in their composition exercises. The teacher should modify the evil effect of substitution by punctuating substitution with a warning that the synonyms that he gives them are not exact 'doubles' of the words that he proposes to teach them and by encouraging them to undertake a study of the differences in the shades of the meanings of synonyms.

✓2. Sometimes, when a word does not have a suitable synonym, it is well to define it. Even when a synonym has been given, *Definition* may help to make the meaning clearer. Thus in order to explain the word 'poet' the teacher might, with good effect, tell the class that a poet is 'a person who writes poetry'.

3. *Explanation* is a common device for making clear the meaning of difficult phrases or constructions. It is now regarded as being out of place in a school-room, but it does not appear to be utterly useless even in the school. It is doubtful whether the teaching of a text in schools could be conducted without making use of explanation. In a way all the devices for the purpose of making the meaning of the text clear might be regarded as explanation but sometimes when something presents itself that does not make itself amenable to any method or device, the teacher has to launch into a detailed explanation of the thing directly and that serves his purpose quite well. The more complex an expression the more it is suitable to be dealt with by means of Explanation. Great poems and difficult literary prose are always taught by this method.

4. Modern educational custom has discredited the *translation* of English words into the vernacular for the purpose of explanation of meaning. The principle underlying this exclusion of the vernacular is a sound one but it is a principle that can only afford to exist with the due admission of a number of exceptions to prove it. In other words we mean that the use of the vernacular in the teaching of English cannot be (and should not be) altogether excluded. There are some expressions that cannot be rendered into English so happily as to convey the full significance of the original but which have exact equivalents in the vernacular, by giving which the true import and meaning can be conveyed more efficiently to the minds of the students. For example in Browning's lines from "The Incident of the French Camp" running—

> A rider, bound on bound,
> Came, galloping nor bridle drew

the expression "bound on bound" presents a difficult case of presentation by substitution by *jumping* suiting the action. It could be explained at length but the best way of conveying to the minds of the students the full significance of the expression, of making them realise the graphic quality of its description of the motion of a gallop-

ing horse, is to give them the vernacular equivalent for it, suiting the action to the words as in the case of substitution. There can be no end of other examples of the same kind where translation in the vernacular is not only unavoidable but even salutary in its effects.

There is another device for the purpose of explaining the meaning of words and phrases that presents the curious phenomenon of not being possible to be classified and put under any head. It is *Derivation*, or the method of relating every word to the word or words from which it is derived and thus making its meaning self-evident to some degree. Thus 'circumspection' might be explained by being analysed into two components 'circum' and 'spection', the teacher telling that in Latin from whose stock of words has been derived 'circum' means 'around' and 'spect' means 'to look', and that therefore circumspection means looking on all sides or being wary and careful. Words whose meanings are explained to the students in this way make a deeper impression upon the memory than those whose meanings are told through substitution. If desired, the teacher may, in order to deepen the impression of the word on the minds of the students and make the fact of derivation clearer, compare it with some such word as 'circumlocution' or 'circumference' and show how the prefix 'circum' in all cases adds the sense of 'all round' to the words to which it is added.

It is difficult to classify this device because as it does not give the meaning directly to the students it might be considered as an elicitive device, and as it gives the meanings of the different parts of which the word is composed and which put together make the meaning of the whole word it might be considered by some to be a device which tells the meaning directly. And as some teachers have actually explained the meaning of the word, it might be regarded as a sort of device which only helps to make more clear and definite our ideas about the meaning of a word that we already know.

This brings us to a consideration of the kind of devices which do not tell the meaning of the words or phrases but

only help to make the meaning that has already been understood clearer and more definite.

(3) Devices that serve to make the meaning clearer and more definite:—

They are chiefly the following :—

1. Comparison.
2. Contrast.
3. Differentiation.

1 & 2.—On account of their being complementary to each other, we shall discuss *comparison* and *contrast* together. Comparison consists in giving one or more words that are similar in the way of their formation. An example will make the point clear. Suppose the teacher in his teaching of the lesson comes across the word 'booklet.' He will, of course, first make the meaning of the word clear, but he may also add after the meaning, a list of similarly made dimunitives for the sake of comparison with the original word. In this case he might tell them (or write on the black-board if he wants them to copy them in their note books) that, 'leaflet, ringlet, rivulet' are similar dimunitives made from 'leaf, ring and river' respectively. Contrast lies in making the meaning of a word or term clearer by quoting its exact opposite before the pupils. Thus the meaning of 'spend-thrift' might be made clearer by contrasting it with 'miser'.

3. *Differentiation* from other similar terms serves to set the meaning of a term in its real form. Thus if the word 'draught' is being explained, the teacher might add to the perspicuity of his explanation by telling the students also about 'scarcity' and 'famine' and explaining that the three words denote a phenomenon that is the same in all the three cases, but varying in the degree of intensity in each case.

In the study of the various devices for the explanation of textual meaning, however, we must bear in mind that the purpose of the various devices and the occasions for their use are not fixed or rigid. They seem to fade or merge into

each other and sometimes the same device may appear to be useful for different sort of occasions and purposes. Contrast may be used to elicit the meaning of a word from the students and the presentation of objects might be used to serve the purpose which has been ascribed to the class of device which includes contrast—that of helping to clear the ideas of the students about the meaning. What is aimed at in this essay is to give the reader only some general impressions about the devices used in the class-room to explain the meaning of words and phrases and to enable them to have some idea of the way in which they may be used.

CHAPTER THREE

TEACHING OF GRAMMAR

" It may roundly be said : no one who does not know a language can understand the grammar of it, and the statement of grammatical rules must always follow, never precede, the examination of the usages and spirit of the language with which they are concerned."—Foat.

The aim of teaching Grammar to the students of English is not, as is often erroneously supposed, to teach them how to write or to understand English. The study of a foreign language has been based by the modern educationists on the principle of what is known as the Direct Method which purports to teach a language to the students by establishing a direct association of its living form with the minds of the students and creating in them a 'sense' with regard to the usages of that language, that works like the best of the mental processes that govern human actions, unconsciously. This language sense is created and developed not by studying the rules of the grammar of that language but by coming into contact largely, exclusively and freely with the original modes of expression used by the people to whom the language is *native*. This can be done best by mixing freely with those persons and by extensive reading of the original literature of the language.

Nevertheless, if Grammar cannot teach us a language it does not lose its utility, even for school students. Its real and proper use lies in giving a training to the students in " observation, reasoning and logical thought," faculties in themselves highly valuable for leading an intellectual life. It also helps to provide rational bases for the common usages of the language as they have already been learnt by the students by direct association with the living forms of the language. Even in human history it was so. Language came before Grammar, which was an after-attempt to classify and resolve to order the multifarious usages of

the language. Therefore in the teaching of English the same procedure should be followed, if the teaching of it is intended to follow that great canon of all instruction, that instruction should "*follow nature.*"

The rules of Grammar should, therefore, arise out of a study of the language forms rather than the language forms should arise out of the rules. In other words Grammar should be taught "concretely"; the rule should come as a corollary after examining many concrete examples of language forms in which its working occurs.

The first step, therefore, in the teaching of Grammar is the presentation of concrete examples embodying and illustrating the use of the particular canon to be taught to the student. A consideration of the essential nature of a number of similar instances will lead them to discover the principle underlying all these examples. The next step, therefore, is generalisation or statement of the Rule. As far as possible efforts should be made to elicit the rule from the students' own observation and comparison. The statement of the rule in definite and precise language too is a work which had better be left to the students themselves, the teacher asking the students continually to amend and improve their statements of it, pointing out where and when they fail and asking suggestions for improvement.

It will be noticed that by following this method the pupils are building up their own grammar of the English language from their own actual experience rather than learning it from a book where it has been put for them all dressed up in a cut and dried form. They are creating it rather than learning it by rote or cramming it. In teaching after this fashion the teacher is following another great principle of education that enjoins upon him the necessity of *teaching inductively.* When the Rule has been stated by the students in indefinite language a knowledge of a principle of grammar has been acquired by them. It now remains only to apply that knowledge to other instances that occur. This should be done by taking other examples and

tracing the working of the rule already learnt, and by classifying them according to the rule.

The next step in the learning of Grammar therefore is application of the rule, which serves to classify the notions of the students with regard to the implifications of that rule and its real import in the actual exercise of the language.

The teaching of Grammar to the young students therefore as presented in the above paragraphs comes down to the rule that the principles of grammar should be taught inductively and applied deductively to other instances. It would serve better the purpose of clarity to illustrate the working of our method by giving hereafter model notes of lessons for the teaching of some grammatical topics to the students. The topic that I have selected to treat in the following Notes is the teaching of Nouns to the 5th class in Indian schools. It might be noticed that the lessons will be some of the very first in English Grammar (for Indian students). Before this stage, only some information about the difference between the subject and predicate in a sentence shall have been given to them.

APPENDIX

Notes for the teaching of Nouns to Class V

The general aims in the teaching of grammar to school students have already been explained in the preceding paragraphs. We shall therefore only be concerned here with the specific aims of each lesson.

The topic is proposed to be dealt with in three lessons dealing respectively with nouns as names of persons, things and places.

It will be noticed that whereas the last two lessons contain preparation the first begins directly at the

preparation stage. Also the material of the second and third lessons is connected to that of the first a recapitulation of whose main principles can form a suitable starting point for the former. There is no necessity of any preparatory step in our method of teaching the subject; for as the rule to be arrived at is to be got by examining instances where it is operative the first step is necessarily to present the instances from which it is to be had and nothing need precede it.

Let us now come to the lessons themselves.

Lesson One—Nouns

Aim:—To help the student to understand that the words which tell us the names of persons are 'nouns'.

Methods: *First step*:—Presentation of Examples. The following sentences will be written on the black-board.

Savitri is a good girl.
Moti reads his book.
Ahmad runs to the school.
Sushila sings nicely.
Kailash is in his room.
Khatoon is on the stool.
Lata cooks food.
Vina laughs.
Kallan is our gardener.
Dina goes to the market.

Then the teacher will ask the students questions in the following manner:—

Subject Matter

The word Savitri tells us about the name of a girl.

The word Moti tells us about the name of a boy.

Teaching Devices

About what does the word Savitri in the first sentence tell us?

About what does the word Moti in the second sentence tell us?

Similar questions will be put with regard to the names in all the sentences ; after which the teacher shall ask :

Subject Matter

All these words tell us about the names of persons.

Teaching Devices

What do all these words tell us about ?

At this the teacher will tell students that all these words are called ' names '.

Second step : Generalisation :--The teacher shall, then, by the help of questions, get the following rule from the students and write it on the black-board asking the students to copy it in their note-books.

Rule :—Words that tell us about the names of persons are ' nouns. '

Third step : Application :—From the sentences given below the students will be asked to point out nouns.

Rama was a famous King.
Sita was his queen.
Vinod plays foot-ball.
Akhtar plays foot-ball.
Vishwa can ride a horse.
Hira swims well.
Hari knows me.
Rameshwar killed a snake.
Hafeez is a good player.
Dhira spins.
Vimla draws water from the well.

Lesson Two—Nouns (*continued*)

Aim :—To help the students to understand that the words which tell us about the names of things are also ' nouns.'

Method : *First Step*—Preparation:—The following sentences will be written on the black-board.

Gurya is a naughty boy.
Sohan is coming to-morrow.
Malti can paint pictures.
Murali can dance.
This table has four legs.
This chair has also four legs.

Questions in the following manner will be asked with regard to the 'first nouns of every sentence'.

About what does the word Girya tell us ?

When the students come to the last two examples they will naturally see that here they have a different kind of *name word*, a kind that tells us about the name of a thing instead of a person.

Second Step : Statement of Aim :—Hereupon the teacher will tell them that they would read about another kind of nouns that day—about the names of things, rather than persons.

Third step : Presentation of examples :—The following sentences will be written on the black board :—

The pencil is black.
The wall is white.
The roof is high
The door is green.
The window is open.
Give me my pen.
Take away your books.
Open your copy books.
Clean your pens.
Write a letter.

Then the students will be asked questions in the following form—

Subject matter

The word pencil tells us about the name of a thing.

Teaching devices

About what does the word pencil in the sentence tell us ?

Similar questions will be put with regard to the names in all the sentences.

Subject matter

All these words tell us about the names of things.

Teaching Devices

About what do all these words tell us ?

At this the teacher will tell the students that they are all 'nouns.'

Fourth Step: Generalisation :—As in the first lesson the rule will be elicited from the students and written on the black board.

✓ *Rule* :—Words that tell us about the names of things are also 'nouns.'

Fifth Step: Application :—In the sentences given below the students will be asked to point out 'nouns.'

This is my bag.
It is Sohan's cat
The cup is white.
I want a big mango.
A tree is standing in our garden.
The nib of my pen is broken.
Give me some paper.
Do you have a car ?

Lesson Three—Nouns (*continued*)

✓ *Aim* :—To help the students to understand that the words which tell us about the name of places are also 'nouns.'

Method : First Step —Preparation :—The following sentences will be written on the black board.

Usha can read Hindi.
Gopal knows my house.
Open the sky-light.
The floor of the room is grey.
Let us go to the market.
Flowers grow in the garden.

Questions in the following manner will be asked with regard to the nouns in every sentence :—

About what does the word Usha tell us ?

When the students come to the last two examples they will naturally see that here they have a different kind of name-word, a kind that tells us about the name of a place instead of a person or a thing.

Second Step : Statement of Aim:—The teacher to state that now they would read about yet another kind of noun that tells them about the name of places rather than persons or things.

Third Step : Presentation of Examples :—The following sentences will be written on the black-board—

The children are playing in the field.
He has gone to the park.
My brother lives in a big town.
He went to a village.
Grass is growing on the lawn.
They are standing in the compound.
There are many shops in the bazaar.
Bombay is on the shore of the sea.
He is standing on the bank of the river.
There are many countries in Europe.

Then, the students will be asked questions in the following manner—

Subject Matter

The word ' field ' tells us about the name of a place.

Teaching Devices

About what does the word ' field ' in the first sentence tell us ?

Similar questions will be put with regard to the names in all the sentences after which the teacher will ask.—

Subject Matter

All these words tell us about names of places.

Teaching Devices

About what do all these words tell us ?

At this the teacher will tell the students that they are all ' nouns. '

Fourth Step : Questions :—As in the first and second lessons the rule will be elicited from the students and put on the black-bord.

✓ *Rule* :—Words that tell us about the names of places are also ' nouns '.

Fifth Step : Application :—

In the sentences given below the students will be asked to point out ' nouns. '

Many doctors live in the street.
India has many provinces.
Rivers flow to plains.
My home is far away.
I daily go to the ghat to bathe.
A frog lives in a well.
He went to Lucknow yesterday.
My brother lives at Simla.
Negroes live in Africa.

Note:—The notes of lessons are given only by way of illustration—they are not claimed to be ideal.

CHAPTER FOUR

DICTATION EXERCISES

Dictation as a form of exercise for school children was much more popular some years back than it is to-day. The reason for this decline of vogue (though it is an unreasonable reason) is the change through the years in the views of the educators of the young with regard to the aims of the Dictation Exercise and its functions in the numerous devices of language teaching.

Dictation in the good old days was regarded as a means of teaching spelling to the boys and secondly as a means of developing good handwriting; and passages were selected that contained words whose spelling was difficult for the student to remember. The teacher believed that by thus posing hard words before the students he was giving them practice in the spelling of those words. Sometimes simultaneous or individual drill in spelling of difficult words was given after the lesson as a corrective to the mistakes made by the students in writing.

In time it was realised that this kind of exercise could not teach spelling though it did develop in the students habits of writing neatly and beautifully*. Spelling, it was seen, was a matter for the eye rather than for the ear, and the remembering of the correct spelling of a word depended more upon the number of times that the students read it correctly written or printed, than upon hearing it spelt correctly. Spelling memory was visual memory and not auditory memory and therefore extensive reading was likely to do more good to the students in the learning of spelling than spelling drill. Again the writing of correct spelling depends more on motor habits than on vocal habits; therefore to ensure correct spelling, reading is more useful than spelling orally.

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*And certainly it is not a bad habit to develop.

Besides, the finding of unusual or difficult words is in itself fallacious for you cannot dictate a word to the students if they do not know its spelling. Unfamiliar words should not be dictated. If the students know the spelling they will write it, if not they cannot write it, and that is all there is to it. They cannot guess the spelling, for spelling in English is mostly a matter of convention and not rules. This desire to present students with difficult words results in ugly blunders that are so common in the students' dictation exercise-books. Some of these blunders escape uncorrected by the teacher, and the student thinking that his way of spelling is correct, persists in his habit of spelling that word wrongly and may continue doing so for years till some fine day he is startled to discover by some accident that his spelling of that word is wrong and needs change. Instances of the continuance over many years of these mistaken habits of spelling under the belief that their way of spelling is right are common, and the funniest part is the tenacity with which the person who makes them defends his way of spelling the word. He cannot imagine that he has been spelling " such a common word" wrongly through all those long years, and it is not till he is shown the spelling in the dictionary that he is convinced of the mistake.

The evils of the old aims and methods of Dictation Exercises are, therefore, apparent. They tended to create confusion in the minds of the pupils with regard to the spelling of words instead of clarifying their notions of it. But these mistaken notions about the functions of dictation did not totally destroy the utility of dictation itself which is very great. The modern educationists regard the uses of the dictation exercise to be the following :—

(1) It affords a mental discipline to the students. Students are trained to hear attentively and put down faithfully whatever is dictated to them. If they are not attentive they miss some words and are thus automatically punished. They must remember all that is said at a time by the person who dictates, for in a good dictation lesson whatever is once dictated, should not be repeated.

So in order to remember well they must hear all the more attentively and must try also to understand the sense of the passage in order to be able to supply themselves any words that they miss or hear indistinctly. Thus intelligence and memory both are exercised. Then they must combine speed in writing with a beautiful handwriting—and with all this must not lag behind the dictation of the passage. All this requires the utmost mental effort on the part of the students and is impossible of achievement without very hard concentration of mind.

Opinions vary with regard to the number of words that can be dictated at a time. Since the principle is that whatever has once been dictated should not be repeated, it is but fair that whatever is dictated at a time should not be unreasonably long. The capacity of different students to remember the quantity of words spoken at a time, is different, but the essential thing is that this capacity can be increased and it should be the purpose of the dictation exercise to increase it. The punctuation marks do not give us much help here for they do not occur at regular intervals, and however they may guide us in recitation they serve very little purpose in dictation. The best thing is to dictate the passage according to words forming sense groups. It affords to the students great economy of energy in remembering: for no special efforts need be made for remembering such invariable prefixes and suffixes as the indefinite article or prepositions or auxiliary verbs. In dictating poetry passages a line is the most natural unit if it is not too long. In fact the capacity of the students for remembering can be increased to enable them to remember, after hearing once, the longest lines in all the metres of English prosody. W. S. Tomkinson goes so far as to suggest the dictation of six four-feet line at a time, though in the beginning he allows the teacher to repeat the whole piece to the student more than once. That amount I may take to be about the *limit* of the unit of dictation.

(2) It promotes in the students the combination of speed and accuracy and beauty in writing. In this

connection it seems pertinent to remark that though dictating hurriedly is a great fault in the teacher yet he should always be a little ahead of the slowest writer in the class. His dictation should always be a little too hurried for the students who write with the least speed, so as to incite them to accelerate it and also to give fair practice in quick writing to those students also who can write with comparatively greater speed.

(3) Though dictation cannot teach spelling it can certainly test it. For this purpose it is necessary that the passage selected must be familiar to the students. New words whose meaning is unknown to the students are useless in a dictation exercise. They neither teach their meaning nor their form to the students. The passages for dictation to the students may be taken from their text-books.

(4) Dictation also improves comprehension of language on the part of the students. If due to some reason some words have not been properly heard by any student he has to guess and write accordingly. This he can do only if he has been following the sense of the passage. Mechanical reproduction is not the aim of the dictation exercises. The aim is to write after understanding the meaning.

This also makes it necessary that the passage must be familiar or at least must contain no words or expressions the meanings of which the students do not know. It is the meanings of the words that are of some interest to the students. Without meaning, the words would not stick to the memory of the students even if the correct spelling is told them, for the form of words is not in itself interesting to behold and can be committed to memory with some labour. It is for their meaning that words are remembered and it is for their meaning, that words should be remembered; and it is for that very reason that their written form assumes a significance and is remembered.

Model Procedure in a Dictation Lesson.

The first thing in a dictation exercise is to choose a suitable passage. The suitability should be kept in view

both as regards the nature and the length of the passage. Very lengthy passages have to be dictated hurriedly and are therefore productive of bad and illegible handwriting, and vague and insufficient comprehension of the meaning.

The class should be compactly seated, all the students being as near the teacher as possible. The teacher should stand at a prominent place facing the class. He should see that every student has his exercise-book open before him with a blank page on which to write. As far as possible a separate exercise-book should be maintained for dictation work. It gives the teacher a better idea of the progress made by each student. He should not allow students to do their dictation exercises in their note-books for rough work or on paper of an insufficiently small size, as lack of writing space results in cramped handwriting. He should also see that the students have clean pens and ink before them, for bad pens spoil the hand more than anything else. The students should be seated upright and hold their note-books parallel to the edges of their desks.

The passage to be dictated should be read once, slowly and deliberately, with proper pauses and intonation, so as to convey to the students' minds some idea of the sense of it. If it contains any words that are new to the students, the teacher should write them on the black-board, where they are to be left for reference while the actual dictation of the passage is going on. Some teachers suggest that the pupils be allowed to consult dictionaries for getting the correct spelling of unfamiliar words during the dictation lesson. There is no objection to the practice on principle but it seems to be unpractical, as the looking up of the spelling of new words in the dictionary would take so much time that the students would not be able to keep pace with the teacher in his dictation. Then too hurriedly looking for the words in the columns of the dictionary would put the mind of the students in a flurry, thus making it impossible to follow the drift of the meaning of the passage.

Then the passage should be dictated. It is not necessary to recount here the things to be observed with regard to the speech of the teacher, for they are common factors for all good speaking and naturally fall under the subject of

the essentials of good reading. It may, however, be briefly said that the speech of the teacher should be sufficiently loud, distinct and deliberate, and that the rhythm of the language must be observed, and an effort made to express the meaning of the piece through proper modulation of the voice ; for dictation, as has already been said, is not only an exercise in writing but also in comprehension. If the students do not understand the meaning of the passage along with its dictation and if no appreciation of the ideas expressed in it is evoked, the dictation exercise becomes a mechanical reproduction of words and its entire purpose is defeated. Nothing which has been once dictated should be repeated, (a third reading of the passage for the purpose of comparison will follow) and the students should not be allowed to ask for a repetition of words. The work should go on in the utmost silence, no sound being audible except that of the teacher's speech. The teacher can by looking at the pens of the students know whether his speed is suitable. If he sees that he is hurrying the students, he should slow down to the proper standard. In the lower classes the marks of punctuation should also be read out but in the higher standards they can be safely omitted and the students can be trusted to supply them ; this may also form yet another variety of mental exercise and an exercise in the comprehension of the language.

After the passage has been dictated it should be read out once again in order to allow the students to compare their transcription and fill in any omissions that have occurred. After the final reading the correction of the copy-books should begin.

Several methods might be adopted for correction. The best seems to be to correct the copy-books in the class itself. In the lower classes the students might be asked to exchange their copy-books with their neighbours, and then the spellings of all words which are likely to be mis-spelt should be discussed. The process of elicitation may be of use at this stage and thus the necessary corrections be made in the respective exercise-books. In the higher classes the students may be trusted to make corrections themselves in their own exercise-books. Another method is to correct the books at home and then to return them to the students the next

day. The idea, however, is that both the teachers and the students should be aware of the progress. Students may be warned against particular blunders that they frequently commit.

The wrongly spelt words may be written by the students five or more times. The reason for this is psychological. Spellings should be automatic for they depend on the right motor habits of the fingers, and the writing of the words a number of times helps in the formation of correct motor habits.

Choice of Extracts for Dictation

Tomkinson suggests that the dictation exercise can be a very potent auxiliary of the appreciation lesson. "Dictation," he says "enables the teachers to widen the literary circle for the child. A great deal of ground which would otherwise be fallow, may be cultivated in the dictation period. He may be introduced to authors who are not represented in his prose and poetry anthologies and his knowledge of those that are, may be greatly extended. A written record of a year's work in dictation, if the extracts have been judiciously chosen, ought to make a passable anthology of prose and verse."

We might say that the student who reads his previous dictation exercises for literary enjoyment, is only an imaginary figure. Besides the extracts become disfigured by corrections etc., and are not in a state to invite subsequent readings as literary pieces. This, however, suggests to us that the extracts chosen should be very good models of literature. To quote Tomkinson again : "An extract should present a clear-cut picture or a well-drawn impression, and should not be too weighty in matter. If the matter is difficult, the child will merely reproduce the letter of the passage." This makes it obvious that extracts out of the history, geography and science text-books should not be used for dictation exercises.

While concluding it may be said in passing that Tomkinson in his book "The Teaching of English" recommends a kind of 'oral dictation'. The teacher reads a short verse to the class and then asks any one of them to repeat it. Such snappy efforts at 'tenacious holding' cannot possibly bring about the 'mental discipline' offered by written exercises. Why ! *This is nothing better than 'catechism'*!

Imp.

CHAPTER FIVE

CORRECTION OF WRITTEN WORK

I have often felt sorry both for the pupil and the teacher after going through the pages of a corrected copy-book; for the pupil on account of the large number of mistakes that his exercise contains, and for the teacher, for the trying and taxing labour that he has had to undergo to correct it. The corrected page usually contains more writing by the teacher than by the student. And the tragedy of the case is that whereas the student has to do it only once, the teacher has to repeat his performance as many times as the number of the students in the class, and in the same amount of time that the student has taken to do the exercise. And seeing to the profusion of corrections one may wonder whether the student to whom this book is to be returned is ever going to read through all that medley of instructions that the teacher has poured on him, and even if he does whether it would be possible for him to understand them all and follow them to the satisfaction of the fastidious teacher, if he also wants to attend to other subjects of his curriculum.

I have almost arrived at the conclusion that students write so badly that it is a hopeless task to correct their exercises. The teacher on his part very properly complains of the heaviness of the work of correction on his shoulders and of the very little time that it leaves him to do any other kind of work. This routine work of correction weighs very heavily indeed upon his spirit already tired by the usual six or seven periods of daily class teaching and generally leaves in him no energy to prepare for the next days' lessons which is after all the chief part of his job. The students of the Training Colleges when faced with the work of the correction of exercises of the students of the class that they teach are impressed by the sheer impossibility of

doing it in the right way. They complain that every sentence in the exercise being wrong, it is impossible to improve the exercise by correction. It should be written afresh, and on a better plan. The reason is that though they begin to learn the methods of class teaching they seldom pay attention to learning the principles of the correction of written exercises. It is my purpose here to try to consider in outline these principles.

The reasons why mistakes in written work are so numerous and the remedy :—

The reason why students commit such large number of mistakes in writing is that they are made to do written composition much before a sufficient amount of practice has been given them in oral composition. Such practice is necessary in order to give the students a solid grounding in the elements of correct English expression. Asking the child to write serious compositions at home without first giving him sufficient oral practice in framing correct English speech, is like building a house directly upon the ground, without a foundation.

Oral composition, therefore, should be practised in the class regularly *a long time before written composition is set.* Even when written composition is set, all exercises should be done orally in the class before they are given for home. If this is done then the main themes of all exercises become clear in the minds of the pupils and mistakes like irrelevance or incoherence are obviated from the composition, only such treatable ones as mistakes of spelling or punctuation or grammar remaining to be dealt with.

Some Principles of Correction

The cardinal principle of correction of mistakes is that they should be corrected as soon as possible after they have been committed; for mistakes if not readily pointed out tend to become fixed and begin to be formed into habits ; and the longer a mistake is allowed to be perpetrated by a student, the more difficult it becomes to remove it. The longer any incorrect form of expression is allowed to dwell in the mind of a student, the deeper becomes its hold on it. So incorrect forms should be allowed to linger in

the minds of students as little as possible Bad habits in expression should be rooted out before they get fixed in the mind.

It. will be seen that in this respect too oral correction is more suitable from the point of view of psychology than correction at home, for in the former case the error is pointed out to the students as soon as it is committed, while yet it is a living issue, or a question of moment; while in the latter case the correction made many hours or even days after the committing of the mistakes when even the context in which the mistaken expression occurred, is only dimly remembered.

A second great principle of the correction of mistakes is that *the best kind of correction is self-correction* just as the best kind of education is self-education. When the pupil himself finds out his mistake and corrects it, he is more likely to avoid it in future and he is better able to do so. For this purpose when any student commits a mistake in speaking the teacher should ask him to correct himself. If he is able to do so it is well. If he is not able to find out his mistake, the teacher should ask other students to correct him. This exercises the students' minds on the particular mistake and they are in future likely to avoid it. This kind of correction in the class is called '*communal correction*' and is much better than correction by the teacher which should be given as a last resort when all means of getting the correction done by the student who commits the mistake or by other students of the class, fail.

Some methods of correction

The first method of making the correction immediately after the committing of the mistake is, as has already been suggested, to do all exercises orally.

The second principle can be worked out both in oral and written exercises. The method of its working out in oral exercises has already been suggested. In the case of written exercises this principle can be acted upon by not giving the correct forms for the mistakes committed by the students but only indicating the general nature of the

supplant - take the place of

mistake and leaving the student himself to find out what it is, and to correct it. For this purpose some symbols might be devised indicating the kind of mistake committed. A set is given below :—

S.—Spelling mistake.
P.—Punctuation wrong.
G.—Bad Grammar.
E.—Bad English.
A.—Ommission.
?.—Truth of statement questioned.
!.—Exaggeration or bombast.
O.—Omit.
Z.—Irrelevance.

The teacher can change these symbols to suit his convenience, or he may add to them. It shall be a great help to the work of the language teacher if the teachers of other subjects too use the same symbols for the correction of written exercises that go to them.

I give below an example of a corrected passage from Thompson and Wyatt, "*The Teaching of English in India.*"

G Once there were some cows on *the* hill.
E A boy was minding *the cows*. After some time a
P man came to the boy. He said to him. *Will* you sell
O me the bell which is round *about* the neck of the
brown cow? The boy said—' Yes I will sell it for
P a rupee'. The man gave him One rupee, and he
S removed the bell from the brown cow's neck.
E After some time the boy *fell to sleep*. Then the
G same man came with some ropes and *taken* away the
brown cow.

One objection against the use of such symbols is that though they suggest the nature of the error they do not suggest the correct forms which should supplant the errors; and that the students in their effort to get at the correct forms might arrive at other wrong forms, and thinking them to be right might commit them to the mind in all earnestness. In practice, however, the students generally are able to arrive at correct forms. But still the possibility

of their making mistakes in self-correction and committing to memory wrong forms is a real one and should be provided against by the teacher. The best way of doing it is to call in the students' exercise-books occasionally for supervision and inspection and to see if they are making right corrections in them. It is a good plan to make the students write out their exercises once more after correction and show it to the teacher. In any case they should be made to write the correct forms of the mistakes that they committed at least five times each on the margin of the page on which the exercise has been done or on the left hand page to it; and these should be supervised carefully from time to time by the teacher.

A reason why a corrected page of children's exercise book is so profusely marked is that the teacher sets up a very high standard of expectation from the written work of the pupils and wants to point out to them every kind of mistake that they commit. Now this is neither a wise policy nor a workable one. All mistakes should not be corrected at once. Only the grossest ones should be attended to first and when these are eliminated, then the teacher may turn his attention to lesser ones. Until the grosser ones are weeded out, the pupil is not able to pay any attention to the less serious ones.

Just as there is a time and the consideration of age and class for the teaching of everything, there is also a time for the correction of different mistakes. Mistakes which should be pointed out in the High School Classes should not be marked at all in the sixth or seventh class. It is better that only the most serious kinds of blunders be eliminated from the writing of the students than that, by the inclusion among their mistakes all such high matters of style, as balance or inversion of sentence, faulty sequence in tense or logic, all should remain unmitigated.

There is a great deal of economy of effort both for the pupil and the teacher in such a plan for it restricts the field of mistakes that both the teacher and the pupils have to attend to at one time. Subtler mistakes are corrected permanently later on.

If some mistakes have been pointed out by the teacher at the improper time they will be repeated by the student in subsequent exercises. The teacher however should not be upset at this. The aim of correction is not immediate but eventual and so the repetition of a mistake should not worry the teacher.

Another way for the teacher to save time and lighten his work is to take apart some typical and common mistakes of all the students and to deal with them for the whole of the class, so that he may be spared the drudgery of doing them over and over again for each and every pupil.

Some General Remarks

It is better to correct a student's exercise in his presence, for he is in that case more attentive to his mistakes than if the teacher had corrected the mistakes at home in the absence of the student. This is not possible to be practised to perfection, but should be tried as much as possible.

Nor is the business of a teacher always to point out mistakes in the students' exercises. He should often point out to them their correctness. Criticism should not only be negative and fault-finding; it should also be appreciative and even extolling, for nothing is so stimulative of genuine efforts at improvement as praise from a teacher. If the pupil knows why a construction that is correct is correct, he also knows why another that is wrong is wrong and the knowing intimately of correct forms is a better means of avoiding the incorrect ones than the knowing well of the wrong ones.

It is an interesting experiment to see how a student that is not able to see his own mistake, can detect the same mistake in a fellow student's exercise-book and for the teacher it has the special utility of guiding him in the use of communal correction to develop a sense of the right forms of expression in the boys; for when this sense has once developed to sufficient power by being exercised on the mistake of other students, it serves very readily in avoiding mistakes in the student's own compositions.

When so much has been said about the imperative necessity of making the correction work light for the teacher and allowing it to take as little of his time as possible, it is also proper to say here that correction work should never be neglected; for the neglect of correction work leaves in the minds of the pupils dangerous misconceptions about the proper and correct forms of expression and if they are not removed they tend to establish themselves firmly in their minds and may finally impair their style of writing rather than improve it.

CHAPTER SIX

TEACHING OF ENGLISH PROSE AND POETRY

Difference in Methods

What is Prose and what is Poetry? The question has been exercising the minds of the greatest of literary scholars since the very beginning of literature, and many and varied answers have been given to it. The subject has been so extensively discussed and to such good purpose that it would be out of place here to start a discussion upon it afresh. It is best for our purpose here to accept the most general and common explanation that has been evolved of the differences between these two modes of expression.

The basis of difference between the two commonest modes lies in the differences in two basic aspects of the human mind—the reasoning and the feeling. Whereas the address of the one lies to the reasoning faculties of the mind, the business of the other is with the sentiments and emotions of mankind.

Language is the expression, through the mind, of life. Prose is language at the ordinary and everyday level of life. It is the medium for all reasonable and serious exchange of ideas, for all business-like transactions between man and man. It is the expression of our ideas in a tranquil state of mind. Poetry on the other hand, is language at the heights of life. It is the medium of the expression of our mind at the most intense moments of life, and is more like an outburst than an orderly setting forth of whatever is weighing on the mind, striving for expression. Emotions have more dynamic force than arguments and that is why poetry has greater motive power behind it than ideas set forth in a syllogistic manner.

There is sometimes a conflict between the reason and the emotional side of our natures. Sentiments and imagination are well known to be beyond the narrowing and cramping sway of reason. Emotions resent it. Imagination

transcends it and builds castles higher than it can ever aspire to ; and that is why the poets are usually known to belong to a tribe of rebels. Much of the 'rebellion in poetry' is only a popularly understood expression for the essential incompatibility between an aspiration and the real conditions operating in life, and the rebellion is against the limitedness of life and human destiny rather than against any particular malevolent society. The business of Prose therefore is to convince and convert and the business of poetry to move and inspire. While prose refutes and establishes, poetry lifts us altogether out of these contentions (in which we see only one side of the truth at a time) into higher planes of thought where all controversy is dissolved and merged into the pervading spirit of poetry, the spirit of generosity and love.

This difference in the aims and purpose of the two kinds of expression makes for differences in the aims of their teaching to the school classes and also in the methods, by which they are taught. The aim of teaching prose and the prose literature of any language to young boys is to develop their intellectual faculties of the comprehension and comparison of ideas ; while the aim of teaching them poetry is to awaken in them aesthetic qualities of appreciating the beautiful in life. Let us come to the aims and methods of teaching prose and poetry and the differences between them.

The aim of teaching prose is therefore, as we have seen, mainly practical and utilitarian. It is to make the students conversant with the structure and idiomatic peculiarities of the language. The first and foremost qualities of good prose are clarity and conciseness and the students are helped to learn what a good piece should be with regard to these qualities. They should be able to appreciate a really good piece of English prose and try to embody its essential qualities in their own style of composition.

Then in prose, matter is more important than form and the logical sequence of ideas of more consequence than aesthetic appeal. The intellectual element is dominant over the aesthetic.

A lesson in prose had, therefore, best begin with a short introduction to the thought contained in the passage to be

taught. This introduction prepares the minds of the students for the knowledge to be imparted to them during the lesson. Such introduction, (which is one of the most important and the primary step in a lesson according to Herbart) may consist of questions which may lead the students to a consideration of the topic which is going to be taught in the class and to feel interested in it and be willing to know more about it. Various methods might be followed to arouse the interest of the students. Generally, something pertaining to the experiences of their everyday lives should be introduced so that knowledge may be related to life.

The introduction, like the magnetised rod when passed through iron filings produces some order in the randomly flowing ideas of the class and makes channels through which the new knowledge can be conveyed to the students' minds. It brings the wandering minds of the students to more or less a common angle of vision and starts them from a common post on the road to learning. It brings their wandering thought to a point from where they can plunge directly into the subject matter under discussion.

After introduction the students are generally told the subject matter of the lesson that is to follow. This "Statement of Aim" as it is called, is the natural tail-end of the introduction and develops automatically out of it.

After this stage the actual presentation of the subject matter comes. In a prose lesson the most obvious and natural thing to precede every thing else in the presentation stage is a reading of the passage by the class as well as by the teacher. Many methods are followed with regard to this reading. Some teachers prefer a loud reading of the passage (or its first unit) by the teacher himself followed by the silent reading of the same by the class or by loud reading of the same by one or two boys as a variant, while others prefer a silent reading of the passage by the class, followed by a loud reading by the teacher and a detailed exposition. These are only minor differences of very little importance. The only significant fact is that in the lower classes loud reading is given more importance whereas in the higher classes silent reading is more encouraged, as the subject matter contained in the lessons meant for the higher classes is

more thoughtful and requires more thought to be understood. The detailed exposition is given, as in all text lessons, by devices which when taken together are named as the 'Elicitive Method' due to the intention in it on the part of the teacher to elicit from the students' own thinking all the knowledge that he wants to impart to them. After the Detailed Exposition come a few questions involving an analysis of the main thought of the passage or the unit taught. The purpose of this Thought Analysis is to arrange a sort of revision of the whole of the matter taught side by side with the teaching, and to enable the teacher to see whether the pupils have understood the meaning of the piece taught to them.

There is greater scope for the proper use of the principle called ' Application of Knowledge ' in lessons of prose than in lessons of poetry. As prose pertains to the ordinary level of life it is something which can be handled and wielded, remodelled and rearranged by every man. It is a product of genius and only geniuses can wield it. With poetry it is different. It is doubtful even if a genius can interfere with a piece of poetry without killing the very soul of it.

A prose lesson is mostly either a story or something in the nature of an essay. If it is a story, the students may be required to rewrite it in a different setting, or to narrate it as related by different characters in the story If the lesson contains an essay, a suitable application may be afforded by making the students rewrite the whole or suitable parts of it from different points of view.

A delineation of the main features of poetry and its difference from prose must have made it clear that the aims and methods of teaching it in the schools must also considerably differ from those of prose. The aim of teaching poetry to youngsters is as has already been told to cultivate in them an aptitude for the appreciation of whatever is beautiful in art or life. It would be labour lost, time ill-spent for us here to examine at length whether the beautiful and the good have any causal connection between them and therefore whether the cultivation of a taste for appreciating

beauty wherever found in life would make us morally better or nobler. It would be equally futile to try to ascertain whether Keats's bold claim that

> "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty"—that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

is precise truth on only a poetical hyperbole, and so to foretell whether by the cultivation of a taste for the beautiful we shall attain to the Truth of the philosophers. It is equally out of place to try to examine the claim of Shelley set forth not in exaggerated poetry but in staid and sober prose that " Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." If these claims were to be even mainly true, then the study of poetry should become one of the chief functions of a man's life. Be these claims as honest as they may, it is true that poetry feeds and nourishes the aesthetic elements in a man's mind and a strengthening and promoting of these elements is one of the essentials of liberal culture.

In poetry, matter is subservient to form. The facts of logic are less important than facts of art. Truth to sentiments is more important than adherence to facts and figures. A poem is an epitome of beauty rather than of thoughts—the very thoughts therein are symbols of her lovely world rather than functionaries of the world of logic.

An introduction to the thought contained within the lines would not therefore be a suitable introduction for a poem ; for it would burden the mind with a serious framework of thought whereas in order to enjoy poetry the mind should be absolutely unbiassed and without any preconceived notions. A common and somewhat hackneyed example is that if we begin to analyse and dissect the properties of a flower all its poetic charm is fled. Even a beautiful face when physiologically considered becomes a network of veins, arteries, muscles, nerves, bones and what not. When automatically considered it becomes a pattern traced by a series of curved lines, straight lines, ellipses, spiral and zigzag lines. When philosophically considered it resolves itself into a peculiar disposition of features set in such relationship with each other in space so as to please an aggregate of commonly inclined persons. It is only when

we consider it apart from all background of system that we can call it "a beautiful face."

Beauty is its own self and can be shown but not propounded. It is a queen " of such generous aspect and mien" that " in order to be loved " it " requires only to be seen." The best way of introducing any batch of spectators to a beautiful piece of art—a picture or a statue is to show it to them. A preliminary harangue on its beauties, much less on its philosophy would mar all its aesthetic appeal for the beholders. So with poems. The best way of introducing a poem to the readers is to read the poem itself to them.

The reading of poetry is an art by itself. A proper reading of a poem may convey to the audience the sense of the whole of it without even going into the meaning of particular words, whereas a faulty reading may destroy all the charms of the piece and may confuse the sense. A model reading of poetry should be expressive of the rhythm and the metrical qualities of the lines. Rhythm according to some critics is the most essential and the chief difference between prose and poetry and is more a mental quality of effect than a regular beat after a measured time. This rhythm is a result of, and is only possible of enjoyment in a bouncing and pleasant state of mind and it flows on from line to line till the very end of the poem, transfiguring everything to its own shape and construction, pervading all. If a teacher is able to bring out the rhythm of the lines that he is teaching to the class in his reading of those lines to the class his work is much more than half-done.

After his own reading the teacher should ask some boys of the class to read the lines, encouraging them also to express the rhythm and cadence of the lines by their speech. This will make their appreciation of these qualities of poetry more realistic.

The detailed exposition in a piece of poetry will be similar to the one used in prose lessons in the devices of teaching used. A salient point of difference will however be that in poetical pieces the teacher shall always

keep the aesthetic purpose in view and dilate more upon the beauties of the poem, as they come during its study. For example in teaching the following piece from Shakespeare :—

> O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
> Against the wreckful siege of battering days !

the teacher should not only give the literal meaning of the expression " summer's honey breath " but try to impress the beauty of the expression and the sweetness and charm of imagery that is packed within these four words on the mind of his pupils. Or, if it is a case of beautiful verbal music as in the following line of Gray : —

> The ploughman homeward plods his weary way

the teacher, should try to bring out the alliterative beauty of the words and the artistic effect of the sound echoing the sense in the expression " plods his weary way. "

In the explanation of poetry more attention should be lavished upon the expounding of the poetic truth than a working out of the lines. There is with some students of English (and I am afraid I should say with some teachers of English poetry also) a tendency to look merely to the meaning of the words of the poem and disregard the spirit of the poem altogether. They would strive hard to get at the meaning of particular words and are generally satisfied with poor synonyms for the original expressions. They generally think that they have finished the best part of their job with a piece of poetry if after lengthy discussions, they have evolved a rough line to line paraphrase of the original in prose, however false to the living spirit of the piece it may be. This quantitative method of dealing with poetry is antagonistic to the very spirit of poetry whose essence is vagueness of aesthetic suggestion. In poetry words do not have as in prose a denotative or a connotative significance but a suggestive one. Therefore, a synonym for a word in a poem or a rendering of it in prose on quantitative principles very often limits its meaning and sometimes kills it.

There is also a great scope for personal interpretation in poetry unlike prose where there is seldom much. Many

of the greatest poems of the world have evoked heated controversies with regard to the meaning of some of their lines. Eminent persons have differed in their rendering of these parts. Even at that, some lines of some poems have never been fully explained to the world, nor will be at any time in future. All that is left to us is to make guesses. It is so with all Arts. We can interpret their import according to the trend of our likes and dislikes, beliefs or disbeliefs, theories and systems. The teacher should therefore encourage his students to think themselves in making out the meaning of the lines of poetry and have their own views about it.

Thought Analysis should follow Detailed Exposition as in prose lessons, as it affords a kind of recapitulation of the main concepts presented to the young learner during the lesson. If the teacher likes he can have after finishing with all the units of the lesson a short recapitulation of the poem by a few questions particularly if a common idea is being developed through all the units.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GENERAL ENGLISH

The aim of teaching literature to young students is not to teach them all literature in the class itself—for it is an aim that could not be achieved within a few years, nor perhaps within a life time, particularly when the young scholar is not free to devote all his time to the study of literature, having to attend to so many other subjects, but to make them love it, and desire to read more of it. The aim of the teaching of literature is not to impart knowledge but to inspire love and admiration. Knowledge is arid and leaves a person cold and unmoved, whereas literature is rich in suggestions of romantic enjoyment. Items of knowledge gained in the class-room are easily forgotten in after life, but impressions of beautiful scenes, or situations from literature last to the end of life. The one appeals to the reasoning faculties of the mind, whereas the other addresses a message directly to the soul of man—"it comes from the heart and goes to it," as Stevenson said. That is what literature primarily does and exists for, and where and when it fails to do so, where it leaves a man uninspired, it has failed in its essential purpose and its one and only mission. Therefore if a student after reading very fine literary pieces in his class does not feel eager to read similar things outside the class, all teaching of the subject is unsuccessful and a waste as far as he is concerned.

What to read ?

And this aptitude for general reading is not at all uncommon in youngsters, and also not difficult for the teacher to create in them. Examples are common of people who have been voracious readers of literature in their adolescent years. Such were Joseph Addison, Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson. Johnson had done most of his reading in his youth and held that before a man comes to a 'man's estate' he should have done all his reading. The more mature age is meant for assimilating and arranging what one

has read ; and for recreation Tennyson, Shelley, Rousseau, Hazlitt were other juvenile readers of contemporary literature.

It is quite another matter what these literary personages read ; and when we come to consider this it opens up before us the question, whether the general reading of students should be controlled or whether they should be allowed to read according to their taste. Here too our general standpoint in considering all literary subjects will help us, and we shall see that encouraging students to read in the forms of literature in which they are most interested will help them to cultivate a genuine and really sincere literary taste more than making them all read according to what their teachers consider to be great and worthy in literature. In fact the opinions of the young and impulsive student and the old (and often stolid) teacher can never agree on this point, and they never should, if the child or boy to whom we are introducing literature is at all mentally normal and healthy. There is a difference in their mental make-up (which is amply explained by the Culture Epoch Theory of the educationists) which makes for differences in their likes and dislikes in all matters of art and literature and the wise teacher is he who takes into account these innate differences and moulds his educational practices accordingly. Even the great literary figures mentioned above were not exceptions to this Culture Epoch Law. For what Rousseau himself read during his childhood was mostly "silly"—French romances and sentimental and impossible novels, like the ones we forbid our youngsters to read now-a-days. Yet they all served very well in setting Rousseau's imagination afire and cultivating his literary taste which bore very rich fruit afterwards. Even Johnson's reading was haphazard and desultory and so was Hazlitt's. In fact with these literary giants that grew to so great a stature in their particular fields, there was no law no code of instruction, no dressed up and proportioned assignments of inspiration. The day of over-conscientious pedagogy have come now ; "anything that comes handy" was the great law of their mental culture. And in their promiscuity of reading they thrived splendidly without even being starved emotionally or aesthetically.

Perhaps it is always so with literature, perhaps the less it is confined to rules, canons, laws or limits the better. Keats says aptly :—

Ever let the Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home :
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth ;
Then let winged Fancy wander
Through the thought still spread beyond her :
Open wide the mind's cage-door,
She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
O sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
And the enjoying of the Spring
Fades as does its blossoming.........

Roaming Fancy

This Roaming Fancy follows no law and is entirely capricious. It may like to dwell with Crusoe in his cave, help to reap his corn and share the pleasures of his simple board, it may prefer to go a treasure hunting to the South Seas in the Hesperides, or it might choose another route and may cast its lot with the Argonauts and hazard the perils of the deep seas in their frail ships ; it might again like to float like a dead leaf on the "stream " of the West Wind, or to flow in the "thousand rills" that descend from "Hebion's harmonious springs" ! It might choose to bewail for Adonis with other mountain shepherds, or to dance at the feast of Bacchus, it might watch from a shelter King Lear's hard plight in the storm or might show a partiality to living in the Court of Illyria with the villainously crossgartered Malvolio : all these things it might do and yet might not be answerable for any one of them to anybody.

The best thing for a teacher then would be to ascertain the taste of each student and suggest to him books that suit it. There is now no dearth of suitable books for general reading for all tastes and ages of young students, and many such books have grown to be classics of juvenile literature, and are enjoyed even by adults for the best of them are highly finished works of art. Many good series of

books now contain separate sections for juvenile books in which they include such works as "Tom Brown's School Days," or "Little Women." No good school should be without a library containing the best of such works for the young people.

But here another objection is raised which it seems necessary to meet. Some people say that if the teacher must have no say whatever in the reading of the young student outside the class-room the student's mind may run to cheap and harmful literature which may permanently degrade his literary taste and thus this freedom may do the pupil more harm than the restraint or control imposed by the teacher should have done. In answer to this it may be said firstly that the phase of mental life when a student's mind runs to reading cheap novels and sentimental romances is only a passing one ; and it never stays in the face of the higher influences that the student is imbibing every day in his class by his contact with his teacher and with works of classical authors. Secondly even the cheap fiction and the penny dreadfuls have their own place in life and, when all is said, a sincere appreciation of the penny dreadfuls is better than no appreciation at all or an insincere or hypocritical appreciation or an adopting of the teacher's opinions or estimate of a book or author. Stevenson was glad when he met a man who preferred Ovide to Shakespeare and was honest enough to say so boldly. Similarly the teacher should not be alarmed out of his wits if his pupil shows a preference for detective stories. It is a healthy sign and bespeaks great possibilities in the pupil. It shows at least that the young man can like books that interest him, and by gradually cultivating his taste by suggestions and friendly discussions he may be made to like a better kind of literature with the same unsophisticated sort of liking with which he regarded detective stories.

Table-Talk

This discussion, which we have just hinted at, is one of the cardinal principles in the development of literary taste. Literature is full of table-talks of famous figures of literature. Hazlitt, Coleridge and Selden have bulky volumes to their credit that are known under this name alone. C. W. Holmes

published three volumes that record only table-talk. Then all famous biographies in literature are nothing but records of table-talks. What charm would Boswell's Life of Johnson have but for its charming table-talk ? And then what are many of the essays of the famous essayists of the world (the Addisons, the Steeles, the Lambs and the De Quinceys) but records of table-talks ? It would appear that a discussion in the spirit of friendliness is the best means of heightening one's pleasure in works of literature and of communicating it to others.

The teacher should, therefore indulge in table-talks with his students and should encourage the students to discuss with him, though the talk need not necessarily be prandial. The presence of the 'table' is not necessary ; the spirit of the talk should be the spirit of a table-talk. It should be the spirit of friendly communication and exchange of ideas, enthusiasm. There should be no restraint on their side and the pupil should be encouragee to express himself freely without the fear of being undervalued or discredited for his opinions or expression.

A good class-library is the best means of encouraging general reading among the students. The school library is something distant for the pupils ; and the large number of books comprising all subjects indiscriminately ranged together under a common roof, the tediously compiled catalogues and the difficulty in finding the desired kind of book very soon discourage the student to make too frequent a use of it. Books in the class-library all being on the same subject and being smaller in number afford an easy access to the young enthusiast. He has to consult no catalogues for he can run his eye along the backs of the books lying on the shelf (a class-room library seldom contains two) in a minute and select the one he wants. One period in a week should be reserved for the issue and receipt of books by the class-teacher.

Interpretative Work

Mere reading, even with intense enjoyment, does not perfect literary taste. It leaves it in an amorphous state, in a sort of huge and formless condition, a kind of pageant of

impressions lying about unarranged and unclassified within the brain. It is necessary, therefore, sometimes to pause in the course of our reading and think a little on what has been read and try to clarify our ideas about it. This is the function of the interpretative work of the students such as writing out explanations of difficult passages, summaries of plots, character studies, essays on "main themes" or "the philosophy" of particular poets or novelists. It casts our ideas about the things that we read in literature into definite moulds and makes them clearer, surer, and more permanent

These interpretative exercises should come after the pieces have been thoroughly read and understood ; and the teacher should be sure that the students have enjoyed what they have read, otherwise no interpretation as such, can take place. When enjoyment of the piece has taken place explanation and interpretation can follow apace ; it then only takes the form of ringing the changes on the common theme which has been supplied by the author of the original piece.

As the theme in such interpretative work is furnished by the piece under consideration the pupil's task in writing becomes easy for the thoughts that he puts in words are not his and come to him readily from the piece itself, his work being only to put them in his own words He has, therefore, to devote his attention only to his style or his manner of putting the things said by the original author in his own language. A greater attention to the finish in style can, therefore, be paid in such cases than in original composition where the frame work of thought as well as the manner of putting are both to be originated by the student, and where, therefore, the thoughts, or the *matter*, as it is more technically called, is also to be paid attention to, perhaps more attention than mere style of putting the *matter* in black and white.

Creative Work

This interpretative work gives the pupils a chance of putting high thoughts in their own language. It is an exercise in expressing other people's thoughts and a suitable

'frail' is afforded to the poor students' language by the pattern of the thoughts of the author. It is like copying out or filling in a picture or design in which the barest outline is suggested to the beginner by dotted lines; and the next step to it is compositions that are hundred per cent original, where the thought as well as the form in which the thoughts are put are both to be originated by the student himself and which in the higher and more dignified spheres of literature is honoured by the name of 'Creation'.

Creative work is naturally the final stage of literary enjoyment, though all enjoyment of literature need not of necessity end in creation. But creation and an effort to create are different things, and though creation is not possible at all, an effort to create is the heritage of all and every sincere effort of this kind must result in something that is at best sincere and worthy of the auth or, and something that may lead to higher things in times to come.

Composition work, therefore, must form an essential part of the literary training of students. It gives them an idea of the difficulties involved in writing something really beautiful and so makes them all the more appreciative of the literature produced by the classical writers.

Writing of poems is hardly a common form of composition exercise among Indian students. Nor do the teachers encourage it, possibly because there are no competent Indian teachers to judge and pronounce upon the efforts of young Indian scholars in English verse-making and to guide their poetic talents on the right lines. And also the knowledge of the technique involved in the making of verses, the familiarity with the idiomatic use of the language, and the critical faculty of seeing what constitutes the really commendable in verse is too little developed in our school boys to render the writing of poems in English of much use to them in their understanding of English. There are, however, many young connoisseurs who, ignorant of and undaunted by the impossibility of achievement, make bold and laudable efforts in verse-making and considering everything, succeed appreciably, and are, we believe, the better for their heroic struggles. Examples could be quoted in

Correcting oral work, dialogue, monologue, written —

ample measure of the creations of these novices ; and such examples adorn the pages of many a school and college magazine. These examples show a fairly high standard of achievement and I have no doubt that if encouraged the practice of writing verses in English will result in greater command over the English language and a saner apprecia-tion of its beauties by Indian students.

Much depends upon the method of the correction of written exercises. I will not deal here with the correction of grammatical errors, but only with 'errors of taste.' Though grammatical propriety in writing is the fundamental necessity of a good literary style, yet I have chosen to regard it as a part of the teaching of grammar and, therefore, out of our scope at present. Here our concern is mainly with the artistic side of composition, and our business is to consider how the young students can be made to judge and evaluate properly the beauties of a literary style by trying to incorporate them in their own styles of writing.

If a great part of the correction of written work is done orally in the class it will stimulate interest in the student's mind in their own writings. It will save a great deal of time and energy of the teacher which would otherwise be spent in correcting the exercises at home by means of marginal remarks which the students will seldom care to look into, much less make use of. The oral method of correcting composition work secures the attention of the whole class to the composition in hand and the pupil when he knows that his exercise is going to be read out before the whole class is likely to put his best efforts into it. After any particular piece of composition has been read, the teacher should pass some critical remarks on it and ask the students themselves to make their own remarks. "But," as Dumville says, "the teacher should not omit to praise enthusiastically every good piece of work......while it is necessary to point out errors the immense value of praise must not be overlooked A full appreciation by the teacher is one of the most powerful stimulants to strenuous endea-your". At another place the same author says : "Much more time than is usually given, should be devoted to the examination and appreciation composition during the lesson-period."

Enthusiasm Wanted

In conclusion we might summarise the main points of the line of thought followed in this essay by saying that the development of literary appreciation in the students is the process of imparting inspiration of literature into them, in different ways at different times, by the dynamic force of sentiment exercised through personal contact with them in and outside the class-room. Hint and suggestion play a greater part in the development of literary taste than explanation and elucidation, and the only qualification for the good teacher of literature is sincerity and genuine enthusiasm for what he has to teach

class contact

class magazine !
at least typed or printed.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MAGAZINES AND THEIR ROLE

"Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man and writing maketh an exact man." In the school it is proposed that the pupil will do all the three in order to develop all the sides of his intellectual life. What the learns in his class, he is required to set down in his own words in the form of essays and other kinds of composition work so that it may be made more definite, and arranged better. He is also required in such exercises to make his personal contribution to the ideas he is dealing with by extending them from his own imagination or by writing on absolutely new themes. Thus the aim of all composition exercises is to teach the students to think clearly, rationally and in a good sequence and to express their thoughts in good language. The writing of essays, stories, poems or articles in magazines is only an extension of this composition work of the students.

There are two kinds of magazines published in schools – One is the School Magazine, often printed, though sometimes only written by hand, published three or four times in a session edited by a member of the staff assisted by an Editorial Board, whose members are generally selected from the students of the school, containing ten to fifteen essays or articles by the students and a picture or two of the Head Master or the students taken on some important occasions. The other are Class Magazines (not so common) which are always hand-written, issued monthly (or as convenient) by every class, edited by the teacher alone with the help of some of the students and containing the same kind of articles as the school magazine.

The uses of these magazines for the students are many. I give below only some of them.

The possession of a magazine gives to the School a means of expression without which it would be as if it were

dumb. So it is with every Class Magazine. They enable it to give expression to the spirit and general tone of the class of which each class is proud.

The writing of magazines promotes in the children a zeal for careful study and scholarship. Those who want to have their articles appear in the magazine do so after due study and thought lest any blunders should disfigure their writing and they be laughed at.

The magazine provides a kind of common forum to the students for the sake of discussing controversial points and venting their opinions.

It also helps to develop to a great extent the faculty of a literary enjoyment in the children. The essays and poems that the children contribute to them are consciously based upon the greatest works of literature and the aim of the young writers is always to write like their models.

They develop in the young and growing students the power of penmanship which serves them handsomely in after life. Many an author who has risen to fame as a writer in after life has in his school days contributed to the School Magazine.

Limitations of a School Magazine

Generally speaking the School Magazine does not form a very intimate part of a student's life. Its issues are few and far between and the Editorial Staff generally do not devote so much attention to it as they should. The Student Editors do not always keep in touch with the individual students of the school and encourage them to write for the magazine though it is a proper part of their job. Many of the students do not know anything about the school magazine. They only know about it when they are given their copy of it, and then, as the quality of the contents of it, due to poor cooperation of the students themselves with the Editorial Staff, is poor, they never read the whole of it. In short, the whole organisation of the School Magazine and its publication is loose and unmethodical. Work is neglected and

hurriedly done, because the magazine has to be brought out somehow. And then what is brought out is not the best that the students of the school can write, yet it is called the School Magazine, and in all probability bears a picture of its beautiful building on its title-page.

If all these defects in the management of the Magazine be removed its usefulness can certainly be increased and its appeal can be enhanced considerably. Still, even if it be the best of magazines, a School Magazine is only an isolated event in the busy life of the students due to the small number of issues through which it runs during the course of the whole year. As the whole school never meets at one place to discuss any problem connected with the magazine, there can be no idea in the minds of the students about the importance of the magazine for them as scholars or of its purpose. The request to students for articles or essays for the magazine is made personally by the Student Editors, and for this only such scholars are approached as are known to them personally. Even those who are requested are approached only once or twice, and in that case too, the request coming from a fellow student only is very lightly regarded. Most of the students are diffident about their ability to write something worthy of the Magazine and a great majority of them just don't care to write. In the classes the magazine is never referred to, it being not regarded as something important, something occupying a prominent place in the programme of the teaching of self-expression to the students.

And besides, very little can be published in three issues of the magazine (sometimes the number of issues is still less). At the most fifty essays, articles, poems and other miscellaneous pieces can reasonably be expected to find place within averaged sized three issues of a magazine. Where the number of students of the upper classes of a school (the only ones whose students could reasonably be expected to produce something fit for publication) is three or four times as great as this we might see and judge for ourselves how small a part of the students of the school have taken a part in the writing of the magazine.

It might be taken for granted that the existence of the magazine has been no gain at all to the students of the school other than those fifty whose writings appear in it : and even to those whose writings appear it is almost a negligible gain. From each one of these fifty students only one contribution has been accepted every year for the magazine, with the result that soon after a pupil has realised his ambition of seeing his essay in black print once he forgets all about it, and the faculty of literary expression that has been dimly stirred up within him is left untended and dies away from sheer disuse.

The School Magazine therefore though affording opportunities to the students to exercise their faculty of literary expression is not strongly operative in their scholastic life for the acceleration of their literary work, or the increase of its output. Yet with all this it has many advantages. It imparts a dignity to the school. It helps it to select a motto for the school and have it printed on the front-cover of it so as to indicate the policy which the school pursues and the ideals by which it lives. It also affords the young student that peculiar thrill of "seeing himself in print" which is shared and confessed by so many authors and this thrill incites them to proceed with their efforts to improve their style of writing till they succeed in making it good enough for all kinds of literary work. It gives to the young enthusiast a sense of making a public appearance, a sense like the one that he feels when appearing for the first time on the platform as a speaker or before the foot-lights as a dramatic performer and as in the last two cases it increases his confidence in himself.

The Class-Magazine is a humbler though more useful type of magazine. The scheme of the Class-Magazine is as follows :

The teacher discusses with the students in the class on what topics they are going to write. Some may choose literary subjects, others might prefer historical ones, some again may write descriptive essays. Very ambitious plans for the building up of the essays are discouraged for the reason that the pupils have to write in the class magazine, from month to month.—These magazines are mostly published monthly

and they cannot afford to spare too much time from their studies to be devoted to essays to be written for the magazine. Only the expression of their thoughts in language free from mistakes in grammar and idiom is to be the aim. The intending contributors (the teacher personally persuades everybody to write) are required to give in their essays and articles before a certain date and on a size of paper uniform for all contributors so that when placed together under a folding cover they might make a handy volume whose pages might be conveniently turned over. When the contributions of all have been received they are put inside the magazine cover (a thick card-board cover can be made to serve throughout the year) and the magazine is placed in the Reading Room of the School along with other Class Magazines. Sometimes some students who write a beautiful hand are asked to copy the whole of the magazine on uniform paper, and if there is any student of Drawing in the class they are asked to decorate it. The title page of the magazine might be designed by some Drawing student and painted in Water Colour, and the first pages of all articles might be decorated with floral designs. Other pages of the magazine too may have floral borders.

The Class Magazine is the students' own work. It is something that they manufacture with their own brains and hands and is not consigned like the School-Magazine, before making its final appearance in public to the limbs of the printing press. It is the expression of the spirit of their class and they are proud of it, and are determined to keep it to a high standard. It is less expensive than the School Magazine. Yet it makes a more artistic appearance and bears the stamp of the individuality of the class and those of its producers on it.

It is also closer to the life of the students, and has a more prominent place in their thoughts than the School-Magazine, which comes out of the press and goes to the shelf of old and neglected newspapers thrice a year or even less than that. By giving the students a pride in their undertaking it creates in them a healthy spirit of competition with other classes in the production of the Class-magazine.

It promotes in the students the habit of writing neatly; the consideration that their essays or articles might be placed just as they are received, open to the gaze of all the students of the school makes them strive to write neatly and beautifully.

The producing of a magazine in this way is education in itself, because it is a sort of learning by doing, and involve activities of various kinds which require knowledge of many other things besides writing. It promotes many more sides of the pupils' faculties than that of expressing their thoughts in language alone. In turning out a beautiful Class-Magazine the students have to acquire skill in various directions, for example poetry, essay and story writing, natural and decorative drawing, illustrating stories and essays, cartoon making, calligraphy, editing, sorting and selecting of articles etc., all of which are deeply engrossing kinds of occupations for them. And this work requires a knowledge of many things, of the proper kind of paper required, of selecting and arranging the written articles, of editing and of such other things: So the magazine is a kind of Project for the students round which cluster many sides of their educational activity.

As the work is entrusted chiefly to the students it gives them a wise scope for initiative in the determination of the contents and the get-up of the magazine. The wide scope for self expression thus afforded to them increases their originality and trains them to work independently.

Considerations to be kept in view in conducting Magazines

It is always good to have a member of the staff of the school as the Chief Editor of the magazine. He furnishes to the magazine what the students lack, a mature critical faculty and a sound frame-work of critical opinion to decide what is best for inclusion in the magazine and what kind of writing should come in order to improve its standard. Though he never over-rides their opinions without giving ample reasons he advises the students on the kind of articles that they should write and helps them gradually to form a literary taste.

The Student Editors also play a vital role in the magazine organisation. They are a kind of connecting links between the Chief Editor of the Magazine and the School students. While they assist him in his work of editing the magazine they encourage students to write for the magazines. Then, the work of editing gives them a valuable training in this kind of work which may fall to their lot in later years.

It is a good plan to organise penmanship competitions and publish the most deserving of the articles sent for it in the magazine, mentioning the positions that the different competitors secure in the Competition. An annual penmanship competition with medals or prizes to be awarded by every school through the columns of its magazine is a plan we can recommend confidently.

CHAPTER NINE

ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

In recent years the old method of examining students (the method of examining them by means of question-papers containing about five or six questions to be answered in two or three hours' time) has come in for a good deal of criticism. Many educationists hold to-day that examinations are not only unable to test the ability of the students, the purpose for which they exist, but are a positive evil in the educational system, as they produce in the minds of the examinee an unhealthy *examination mentality* which results in unhealthy methods of study, ill-assimilated knowledge without the various parts of it being well co-ordinated and harmonised, and a mistaken attitude towards all study and its aims. Examination, as they used to figure in the academic life of our educational institutions uptill now, have, therefore, been variously described as "an enemy of the pupil," "an obstacle to education," "a begetter of rivalry and strife," "an emetic," "a glorification of memory at the expense of the rational and creative powers" and by Thompson, the late master of Trinity, as "a presumptuous attempt to gauge the depths of human ignorance."

One of the chief defects attributed to the old system of examination is that it aims at testing so many kinds of knowledge and skill at one and the same time that it confuses the products of all in the answers given to the questions by the examinees and consequently fails to test any with any degree of accuracy and reliability. Considering the kinds of answers that the student is expected to give in the examination we see that he is required to write answers in the form of short essays on the themes set by the questions. Now, the writing of essays requires more than a knowledge of the subject of the question. It requires a considerably high degree of skill in composition entailing an ability to arrange the idea in good logical sequence, to marshall facts and figures so as to lead to a desired conclusion, a knowledge of the grammar, punctuation and spelling

of the words of the language in which the answers are given, and marks are deducted even for bad hand-writing, as if every examination was a test in dictation or calligraphy.

This multiplicity of the skills expended in the production of a single examination answer makes it impossible for the examiner to judge the student's acquirements in any of them in the composite result of all of them that the answer is. So even if the answer is to a question on a subject, say, in Geography, the teacher finds himself marking spelling mistakes, instances of faulty sentence construction, bad grammar—in fact every sort of mistake that can creep in answers of this kind. Thus every answer of this type is an exercise in the particular subject to which it pertains as well as an exercise in composition ; and not doing well in the second aspect of it necessarily influences the students' achievement in the former which should not really be involved in and mixed up with it but should be kept apart, in separate identity, and judged independently.

And, even with this multiplicity of the aims of judging, what are the old examiners' standards of judgment ? Taking examinations to be conducted with a view to "*measure*" the ability of the scholars, what are the old examiner's scales of measurement ; what systems or rules guide him and ensure the proper award of marks to the examinees ? Living as we are in times of precision in the matters of all measurement there is no such standard with the old examiner ; or whatever there is it is a very fluctuating and shifty standard. The immutable standard in the matter of judging the answers of the examinees in an examination is "*how it strikes the examiner*" and no one can say before hand how it shall strike him. Nothing strikes in exactly the same way two different persons. The difference in the judging of the merit of the same answer by different examiners has been immense, the greatest recorded difference being a difference of about 50 marks, a difference sufficient to daunt the most complacent of the supporters of the old methods of examinations. Even to the same person the same thing strikes differently at different times, places, moods and settings. These differences are due to the

entirely capricious behaviour of human likes and dislikes, the subjective nature of all evaluation of complex products and the irresolute element of human personality in all human judgment. Each examiner is right, at the time of his judgment, from his own point of view, and in so far as he is right, others, in his opinion, are wrong The examinee is therefore left a plaything to the caprice or idiosyncracies of the examiners, and is dealt with summarily ; for the examiners, having to judge a large number of answers cannot ponder over each for a great length of time. Many errors are doubtlessly committed though, as has been aptly said, they are carefully hidden from the public view as doctors' errors are hidden under tombstones. The chances of errors can be obviated, or at least reduced to a negligible minimum by having the same answer-books examined by a number of examiners of different tastes and ways of thinking. But it does not seem to be practicable, due to lack of time and funds at the disposal of the examining bodies.

All these difficulties point to the desirability of substituting methods in judging the merits of the students that would be more definite and regular, and less liable to fluctuation ; methods that would free the result of the examination from the vitiating influences of the 'personal equation' of the examiner. Such methods would be less subjective and more objective so as to be amenable to measurement by objective and more definite scales.

To reach the accuracy that the new examiner desires, a scale of measurement is necessary. The scale should be a finely graduated one. Rough scales are useless for examination purposes where sometimes the merits of two students differ only very slightly from each other.

To meet all these objections, and answer all the ends hinted at above, a new kind of tests was devised by educational psychologists which are based on a large number of questions requiring short answers. There are different kinds of tests to gauge different kinds of attainments ; thus there might be vocabulary tests, spelling tests, comprehension tests, grammar tests and tests in punctuation. The examinees are not expected to give long answers. The answers are often single worded. More often the examinees are required

only to put some mark at a right alternative out of several given in the test. Never are the answers expected in sentences of any length.

As one test only aims at testing one kind of knowledge of the student the multiplicity of aims of the old kinds of examinations is eliminated. Then as the questions asked admit of only one answer, the possibility of the personal likes and dislikes of the examiner being unfair to the student is removed and the examination proceeds on surer and more certain lines. As a matter of fact the examiner in these kinds of tests is like a scorer in a match of cricket. As the scorer has to score the number of runs that a player has made irrespective of what he may personally think about the merits or demerits of any player, in the same way the examiner in examining the answers of the examinees to these tests has to give marks for all correct answers, and there is no margin for the exercise of the personal opinion of the examiner. The examiner is, in a sense, the agency through which the test is applied to the students. The real examiner is the person who frames the test, and as these tests are framed and standardised with great care and after extensive labour of comparison, revision and application they are very proper and accurate instruments of measurement of the kind for which they exist.

There are four chief kinds of such tests :—

1. True and False Test—in which the answer that is correct in point of fact is marked out from a pair of alternatives.

2. The Multiple Choice Test—in which the correct answer is marked out of more than two alternatives.

3. The Completion Test—in which words omitted from a number of statements have to be supplied.

4. The Short Answer Test—in which short answers mostly monosyllables, are required to pointed questions, that admit of only one and definite answer.

To illustrate the principle of such test-formation, I give below composite test in vocabulary merit for the high school classes of Indian Schools.

Vocabulary Test

Read the following questions. In answer to each question several words are suggested after it in a bracket. One of these words is the answer. You have to underline the word that in your opinion is the correct one.

1. What is the one word for
   (1) The man who is courteous to ladies
   (nobleman, gallant, fop, politician)
   (2) A man who lives in villages
   (clown, labourer, rustic)
   (3) A movement of the hand
   (hand-writing, gesture, signature, token)
   (4) The man who does good to others
   (benefactor, leader, preacher, teacher)
   (5) The possession of sole rights
   (contract, bond, monopoly, claim) ?

2. What is the one word for describing
   (1) Who is born after the death of his father
   (fatherless, orphan, posthumous, unfortunate)
   (2) Something that comes in the end
   (subsequent, final, next, succeeding)
   (3) A thing which is sure to die
   (mortal, fatal, doomed, condemned)
   (4) A thing that can be hated
   (painful, injurious, decayed, contemptible)
   (5) Something that is fallen from its standard
   (broken, degraded, shaky, crippled) ?

3. What is the word that has the same meaning as
   (1) To eat up
   (to consume, devour, choke, denounce)
   (2) To be similar to
   (copy, assemble, resemble, like)
   (3) To prove to be right
   (plead, question, doubt, justify)

(4) To bring back
(return, draw, restore, devise)

(5) To take away by force
(steal, hide, render kidnap) ?

4. In each bracket given below underline the word that has almost the same meaning as the word on the right side of the bracket.

(1) Tradition	(Society, opinion, habit, custom)
(2) Formation	(Making, completion, discovery, invention)
(3) Foundation	(Building, base, payment, reason)
(4) Melancholy	(Sadness, ball, disease, terror)
(5) Tribe	(Class, home, clan, tribe).

CHAPTER TEN

DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY APPRECIATION

Man has never remained satisfied with earning bread alone. The moment he has satisfied his most pressing needs his mind turns to his surroundings and he begins to think how he can rearrange and improve them. It might be the hanging of a festoon over his doorway, or the rearrangement of the furnishings of his cave so as to produce symmetry, but the motive is the same—it is aesthetic. The motives of his other acts are utilitarian. They are performed to satisfy some urgent physical need and thus have a material gain in view, whereas the acts called aesthetic are performed with no other object in view except the aesthetic pleasure that the results of such actions afford to him.

Then the savage has (as all men have) emotions and they mean much to him in life. They find their expression in fits of rage, laughter, dancing and jumping about and other such wild acts. In savages the expression of the emotions is more violent than in civilised persons. Still this expression tends to follow an order or rhythm. Laughter has a pattern, and a peculiar cadence of its own. Even the wild dancing and jumping of the savage tends gradually to flow in regular movements which tend to be repeated. This tendency to regular and rhythmical expression has given rise to the regular metres of verse and to dancing and singing.

From this we gather that the basis of the artistic impulse is aesthetic and not utilitarian ; that art is the expression of the emotions of man and that it can only be indulged in at times of leisure.

The impulses that had such a crude and rough beginning developed through the thousands of years that have passed since man has inhabited the earth to a great complexity and they have given to the world such a rich yield of creations of multifarious kinds, that it is

impossible to consider them all together. Nor is it my purpose to do so, for I have to consider only one of the arts that employs as its medium language, just as painting and music employ forms and sounds.

The value of literature in the civilised life of to-day may be considered under the following heads :—

(I) It satisfies man's inner craving for beauty. On the part of the artist it satisfies his inner urge to 'create' beauty.

(2) It affords a great deal of innocent pleasure to its readers. The pleasure that it affords is disinterested and pure. It elevates man.

(3) By setting before us proper human ideals it inculcates a sense of morality among the people. It teaches people to think and feel greatly about life, and thus incites them to act likewise.

(4) It teaches them to see the beautiful in life and thus makes life more beautiful.

(5) It appeals to the emotions of man and often helps in purging the pent up emotions which would otherwise make him morbid.

(6) It serves people as a sort of refuge from their worries and anxieties.

(7) It enables them to spend their leisure in a pleasant and instructive manner.

(8) It gives refinement to the mind and the heart of man. It makes it more subtle in considering portions, and proportions, situations, relations, and arrangements. This refinement is one of the concomittants of intellectual power though it must be carefully distinguished from effeminate delicacy.

There are some people now-a-days that are so partial to the triumps of science as to decry all art as useless. They hold it to be the result of an exaggerated imagination and think that the world can very well do without it. But this view seems to be mistaken. Art (and hence literature) is complementary to Science and with it completes

that bi-polar process of the psychology of man that has emotions as well as reason as two sides of mental activity. Both are essentials of complete human life and none ean be neglected. The creations of modern Science overwhelm us to-day. We live amidst a galaxy of scientifiic inventions; and all art is hidden from view. But art is still the soul of the whole, though, like the soul, it may be invisible. We may cherish all the creations of Science if we like, but if we were to banish all the works of art from our midst—destroy our Ajanta Caves, burn our Shakespeares and Tulsi Das, the world would to-day fall into the chaos of savagery. There have been conflicting theories about the nature of Art itself and hypotheses differing widely from each other in essentials have been put forth to explain Art; but there has been a unanimity of opinion with regard to one point, and it is that a development of the taste for Art is a part of liberal education of an individual and that a man's culture is to be measured by his ability to admire the beautiful in life.

This has made clear to us the importance of literature in life. It is now proper for us to consider a few of the elements that go to the making of literature in order to see into what kinds of activity does a development of literary appreciation in children lead us. The basic elements of literature are, firstly, its quality of giving aesthetic pleasure, secondly, its relation to human emotions and imagination and thirdly, its devotion to form as form, which includes at different times such literary phenomena as metre, rhyme and the graces of style.

Having considered and clearly understood the origin and the nature of literature and its place in the life of man, we can now proceed on to consider how we can develop an appreciation of it among our young students. This can be considered under three heads dealing with students according to their age and the class in which they are reading, with separate sections dealing with the general reading and compositions of the students.

Lessons in Appreciation

1. *The Early Stage* :—

The Culture Epoch Theory tells us that the psychological process of childen are very simple, and that they are mainly objective. Literature, therefore, should be presented to them for the first time as simple stories and little verses. The former will create in them the interest in life other than their own (or the plot element of stories in literature) and the latter shall introduce them to the indefinable, but very definite pleasure that is derived from a perusal of poetry.

The child as yet is not able to get into literary enjoyment from the book, for in the earlier stages teaching work is mainly oral. It is the teacher, therefore, that must get it for him and present it to him, and it is the teacher's duty to see that the thing he conveys to the minds of his young wards does not suffer in transit.

The stories that are to be presented ro the young minds should be simple and should involve a large amount of action. Such stories should be told to them orally and care should be taken that only the story side of it is presented before them. No attempt should be made to present it from the reflective point of view. Even the moral, if one is to follow, should come when the students have first enjoyed the story thoroughly. The best thing would be if the moral is developed out of the story and understood clearly by the students themselves without being told by the teacher. A few questions like, " Do you like this story ?" or "Which of these two stories do you like better" would be provocative of independent judgment though in the most germinal form."

Fairy Tales, such as those of Grimm and Hans Anderson, provide an excellent stock of stories for small children. Children will not by daunted by the impossibility of some parts of them. All that they are concerned with is the action and if the action is arresting enough they will not care whether the plot of the story is humanly possible or not. The child's interest is as yet mainly objective and

what he seeks for in a story is not personality but events. The language of such stories should be of the simplest as far as possible, conversational type. The conversational language lends itself better to narration in the class-room than other kinds of language.

A great difficulty lies ahead of the teacher in the selection of small poems to be taught to children; for though people talk of such a thing as children's poetry it is seldom great poetry and for the very smallest of children even children's poetry (of which the very best have been produced by Stevenson, Hood, Mrs. Hamans, Lewis Carroll and others) is a little too difficult. Yet, there are a few classical poems that are good; and every day good children's poems are being made and included in junior readers.

The poems that should be prescribed for children should be simple in meaning though beautiful in expression: I would not recommend the inclusion of English nursery rhymes in the courses of reading of Indian students. The Indian students begin to learn English when they have passed the nursery age and the regaling of their more mature minds with such puerile stuff as "*Little Tomy Tucker*, or "*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall*", is disregarding their mental growth. Secondly, these verses are not of universal application. Their suitability is not only geographically limited, but they express the temperament of the child of a particular country at the pre-school age after which they become even to him, nonsense rhymes; they cannot bear transplantation to the Indian shores without losing the little and short-lived utility that they have in their native land. A child of eight or nine years can hardly see any sense or poetic beauty in:

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water,
Jack fell down and broke his crown
Ann Jill came tumbling after.

The author of this treatise, to whom this poem was happily introduced at ten years of age, clearly remembers

the uneasiness that he felt on reading about violent fate of the unhappy Jack and the unfortunate Jill. As soon as he came to the line: *Jack fell down and broke his crown,* the image forced itself upon his mind of Jack lying in a ditch with his crown as hollow as the hookah of coconut shell of a Bengal villager and Jill in a white frock unconscious by him. " And why did Jack fall down ?" he used to say to himself, "and if he did, why did Jill tumble after him ? Did Jack pull her after him ? Too bad of him. Hard luck for both anyway..." vain questioner that sought to see any justification for a frankly absurd thing and ignorant of the fact that it was but a nonsense rhyme though wrongly set for sensible students.

English poems for Indian children therefore should be those whose meanings have a universal application. Poems dealing with the commonest natural phenomena for example, or those dealing with the simplest of human sentiments may be taught to them. A classical example (and a very good one too) is the poem beginning *Twinkle twinkle, little star.* Cowper's *The Worm* too is a very good children's poem.

The presentation of a poem to the child-mind so as to make it appreciate some of its literary power is the crux of the art of all junior teaching, and gradually as the knowledge of the student advances and he goes to the higher class this problem of presentation becomes more and more elusive ; for the teaching of literature is the communication of atmosphere and the living spirit of the author and not of any facts and figures. The method to be followed shall, therefore, be such as considers the piece as one artistic whole whose beauty can only be appreciated when it is considered as such.

The meanings of words in presentation of such pieces shall, therefore, play a secondary part though not for that reason an unimportant one. Meanings of difficult words should be explained only as far as they help in the understanding of the sense of the passage, but they should never be allowed to dominate the poetic beauty of the poem. Too much explanation of particular words and

phrases should be avoided. It weighs upon the minds of the pupils which should be left as free as possible to enjoy the artistic beauty of the piece. In other words, the presentation of the piece should be on synthetic lines, rather than analytic ones, and the effect of the whole should be paid better attention than the comprehension of single parts.

The method of teaching languages in the earliest classes is oral. Therefore, recitation will play a large part in the learning of poems by young children. Simultaneous drill, punctuated by individual occasional recitation, is the best method of making the children learn verses. This drilling, besides having other advantages outside the scope of this essay trains their ears to appreciate the rhythm and measured cadence of poetry, which would be impossible if they read the poems from their books and never heard them being recited. Then, having the poem repeated many a time and trying to express the sense by gestures and intonation helps to bring out the meaning of the words and impress it on the students' mind imperceptibly.

A large element of dramatization must enter into poetry in the lowest classes. Whenever a poem can be acted, being taught the teacher must make the students act it. During recitation, too, he must act himself, suiting the action to the word, and ask his students to follow him. This will make the poems much more interesting to the students. Whenever possible he may have poems sung to music. This should make the pupils associate poetry with music and love it all the more as a consequence. A large amount of games might be built round the poems that the pupils are to learn, and thus, their learning of poetry might be turned from a task into a play, and this is the surest way of making them learn it well.

Memorizing will play a large part in the devices of a happy teacher of poetry. Individual recitation and simultaneous recitation shall help the memorizing of choice poems by the students. Knowing a choice piece of literature

by heart is the surest means of appreciating it. It places it within the mind, always at hand and leads the student to repeat it at his happy moments when he is in a mood to enjoy it, and thus strengthens the bonds of association between it and the scholar. It also renders the bonds more pleasant, and makes the student regard the piece as the companion of his happiest and most inspired moments. Even the adult reader of literature knows his favourite passages by heart. It enhances his enjoyment of literature. Therefore, the habit of learning literary pieces by heart should be cultivated during childhood.

Learned linguists, all the world over, agree that the *Look and Say* methods of learning a foreign language are better than *Phonic* methods in order to make the young learners familiar with the exact sense of the words. Whereas the latter stuffs the young pupils' minds with words jumbled together in the text-book because of having similar sounds but which have little relationship in actual life, the former gives words to the pupils in an agreeable variety as they occur in life. Thus, by not drowning the pupil's brains in words of similar sounds, the former leaves them free to enjoy the sense of words. The *Look and Say* method, therefore, should be adopted in teaching reading to very young students.

The Middle Stage

The essentials of the method of the development of literary appreciation have already been laid down. They shall invariably be the same throughout the school age of the child. It remains, however, to discuss the variations in detailed procedure from stage to stage.

From Fairy Tales and Fables the students' minds turn to more serious things. It is at this age that the students like stories of adventure and heroism, *Jack the Giant Killer* and the like. They begin to realise from now onwards the dignity or meanness of an act apart from its story interest, and can give sustained appreciation to prose written in a more difficult and consciously artistic manner. Adaptations from classical stories prove very good for students of this age. We have good instances of such adaptations in *Stories Retold* series published by many publishing concerns.

Now the pupil can read the stories from his books and, therefore, the method of teaching in the class shall differ from the methods of the early stage. The written text shall be the basis of all study; therefore, an exercise of the expository art will be called forth on the part of the teacher.

There are many sides to the question of the exposition of English texts to school classes; but we are here concerned only with those efforts on the part of the teacher which are consciously directed by the aim of developing literary appreciation among the students. Even the exposition of text strictly considered falls within our scope only as far as it helps the stimulation of that aesthetic consciousness of the beauties of literature on the part of the students that I have taken as the subject for this essay.

The lesson in any language that is intended to evoke literary appreciation is called an appreciation lesson which is something quite apart from teaching lessons. With the general nature of and procedure in appreciation lesson I propose to deal when I come to the High School stage. Suffice it to say here (what has already been hinted in the remarks on the early stage of school classes) that aesthetic enjoyment of the whole should be the primary aim of all teaching of literary lessons, and the explanations of textual meanings should occupy only a secondary place. It would be difficult to say with exactitude how much does a comprehension of textual meaning help the appreciation of literary beauties. It certainly helps a great deal. But the point is that even textual explanation should be arranged round and moulded according to the central aim of inculcating a literary appreciation of the piece taught, rather than given with a view to make clear the meaning of difficult parts before the students. In any case, the artistic unity of the piece should not be allowed to be destroyed by, or submerged under, a filmy sea of verbal explanation.

At this stage the teacher might begin what is the most vital factor in the promotion of literary taste among any people—*a discussion on what is read*. It need not be a learned discussion. Efforts should only be made to know students' real opinion on what they read, and if they feel

zealously enough for what they say it should not matter much whether they are right or wrong according to the teacher; for after all literature like all art, is a matter of personal feeling. R. L. Stevenson says that the delight we take in the beautiful is essentially capricious. If the students feel interested in what they read it is all that is desired. Judgment will come of its own accord in good time.

Story games might be arranged in the class. Children should be asked to read freely in their vacant periods in their school libraries and bring suggestions for story plots. They also might be asked to bring similar suggestions from home. Their suggestions should be discussed in the class and the students should be encouraged to frame stories on the plots they thrash out of their discussion.

The poems taught at this age can be more difficult in language and versification. Poems like Charles Mackay's *The Miller of the Dee*, or Charles Kingsley's *The Three Fishers*, or Brownings short lyrics describing the different seasons in England, would appeal most to the young minds at this stage. Although the understanding of the poems will still be objective, as indeed all mental processes of the children at this age are, they will have some conception of the dignity of the theme and the expression. Recitation, simultaneous as well as individual, will still form the stock of the devices of the teacher, though simultaneous recitation will be less resorted to in the primary classes.

The High School Stage:—

It is for the first time in the high school classes that literature is presented to the minds of the students in a pure form, unmodified by the hands of the editor or adapter of the pieces selected for small children ; though still it is only in pieces of comparatively shorter length. It is now that "they are first made to drink in the beauties of literature directly from the stream of literature and not through quills or pipes of adaptations or re-narration, though even yet only in sips or single draughts." It is at this time that real extracts from great works famous in literature are included in their text books unmodified in any respect. It is now that they are introduced to essays written by the greatest

essayists of the language. Poems immortal in literature for all time to come and appreciated alike by the young and the old are presented to them and novels by great novelists, unmodified in language though sometimes abridged in size, are included in their courses.

It is also in the high school classes that the lesson in appreciation assumes its proper form and style and, therefore, it is proper here to consider it in some detail.

The aim of the lesson in appreciation is clear. It is to awaken appreciation in the minds of the students of the beauties of literature. But there is no prescribed or fixed form for the method to be followed in a lesson of appreciation. Many methods might be successfully followed. In fact, the success of the lesson does not rest so much on the methods followed in the teaching of it. It depends on something which is quite different from all methods in its very nature. It rests on "inspiration." Inspiration is the only method in literature and it follows no methods. Therefore, the communication of inspiration by any method is the best method in the teaching of literature.

This shows clearly that the teacher must himself be enthusiastic about the thing he wants to teach, that he must himself appreciate and be inspired before he can make others appreciate and inspire others. A genuine love for the thing that he wants the students to admire makes the teacher's teaching sincere and, consequently, impresses upon the students' minds the weight and importance of what the teacher says ; for sincerity and enthusiasm are more dynamic than exposition and elucidation. Therefore, if the teacher is sincere and enthusiasticabout his subject, his zeal will find its own method of expression and will impress the students.

Several things, however, seem to be worthy of attention in an appreciation lesson. To put them with the precision of authority, I quote Mr. G. S. Krishnayya, M. A., Ph. D, from his Chapter on "Class Teaching" in *Instruction in Indian Secondary Schools* (Edited by E. A. Macnee, M.A., I.E.S., Oxford University Press). In writing of the appreciation lesson he says—"It is not easy in this case to state the order

of procedure. The student is passive rather than active, is contemplating and enjoying rather than attacking and working to secure a particular result." A few suggestions, however, which have been found useful may be given here.

1. It is of primary importance that the teacher brings to the class an enthusiasm and joy for the picture, music, poem, person or achievement which he wishes to present.

2. Children must not be forced to accept, nor even encouraged, to repeat the evaluation determined by teachers.

3. Spontaneous and sincere response on the part of the children should be accepted even though it may not conform to the teacher's estimate.

4. Children should be encouraged to choose from the forms or situations presented for their approval those which they like best.

5. The technique involved in the creation of the artistic form should be subordinated to enjoyment.

6. Throughout the play spirit should predominate, for if the element of drudgery enters, appreciation disappears.

The first of these suggestions I have already emphasized. The second and third point out to the great peculiarity of all art and literature—the importance in it of a man's personal point of view, the great validity of a man's personal unaccountable likes and dislikes, enthusiasms, loyalties, aversions. The fourth is a corollary of the principle underlying the second and the third suggestions; it means that the students should be encouraged to appreciate individually whatever strikes them as beautiful or poignant. No attempt at aesthetic uniformity should be made by the teacher; for just as individuals differ in their tastes, their ideas about beauty also differ. The fifth means that the synthetic aroma and charm of the whole must not be allowed to be superseded by and, therefore, submerged in a consideration of the technical side of the piece such as the figures of speech, kinds of metres with accented and unaccented feet. The last only means that the learning of

literature should not be converted into drudgery, but should be made as interesting as possible (though it is true of all subjects and not only of literature).

Some pieces should be studied more intensively than others, indeed, it is one of the unignorable principles of literary teaching that a few pieces should be studied as exhaustively and completely as possible. It produces depth in the understanding of literature of the students and gives their minds a training in the enjoyment and appreciation of literature whereby their capacity to enjoy all literature increases, for, though, in literature methods without the spirit will not bring enjoyment, training will do a great deal to heighten it. It should not be thought that this devotion to a single piece to the exclusion of others is carried at the expense of the others. It will, on the other hand, result in an increased appreciation of the other pieces to be taught to them and shall make that appreciation more methodical and definite.

The appreciation lesson is, therefore, the means adopted in the class-room for developing a sense of the beauty of literature among the students. Its methods are inspirational and not expository, nor yet explanatory; though these things, too, help in the appreciation of literature just as mind helps the soul, though it is not itself the 'soul.'

APPENDIX

GENERAL HINTS FOR THE GUIDANCE OF TEACHERS

Teaching is an art and it is not quite so easy to learn it or to follow it after learning it. It is an art in the sense that you have to handle facts in a way that children may learn them without feeling it a burden, or better if *they learn without feeling that they are learning*. It is difficult because a teacher has to put in a tremendous amount of labour to prepare his lessons and he must have the right amount of patience and the right type of mood before he steps into the class. There cannot be any set rules to be followed by the teacher the teacher himself can best solve his problems—but he requires a typical type of training and guidance to give him the proper background and to caution him against certain *dos* and *don'ts*.

1. *Before the Lesson.*—An unprepared teacher has no moral right to teach. It is, therefore, important that a mastery over the subject-matter be attained before one even thinks of teaching. Here the teacher has to use his powers of resourcefulness and judgment—only what can be digested is to be given.

A teacher should always have a clear aim of the lesson he is going to give. It is not healthy to teach rainfall of India because it forms a part of the Matriculation course. Can the reasoning and thinking powers be developed through a lesson on the rainfall of India? If yes, the lesson should be so planned and organised. Timing of a lesson is also of importance. Suitable emphasis on things is only desirable. There should be no rush towards the end of the lesson. It is better to give half the lesson well than to finish a whole lesson hurriedly. It is always desirable to have at least five minutes towards the end of the period for revision and for removing students' difficulties.

What is the method of teaching that he is going to follow ? I am sure it can't be the same for all lessons. Whatever method is followed, the teacher must devise ways and means to enlist the interest as well as the active co-operation of the students.

There are many lessons that need a lot of illustrative material *e.g.* maps, pictures, models etc. They should not be selected haphazardly ; standards will differ from stage to stage. There may be many things that are not available in the school. They could be borrowed if they are available locally. They could even be prepared by the teacher with the help of the arts and crafts master in the school. Hand-work room, if they are not available at all. Sometimes the teacher can plan a better illustration than the one available in the market. Whatever is to be done must be well thought out and planned.

Writing notes of lessons is a very healthy and useful practice, if one has got time to do it. Unfortunately the rush of work in our schools does not allow our teachers any breathing space and nothing great can be done in the direction even by the most conscientious of our teachers as long as our authorities do not think of lessening his work. I would, however, suggest to every teacher to quickly think over his next day's work at home and make out a definite mental picture of what he intends doing in his next day's lessons.

With this guidance we may assume that our average teacher is now prepared to enter the class. Let us now review his activities inside the class-room.

2. *The Teacher enters* :— He surveys the whole class ; nods to one, cuts a joke with the other, gives a smile to the third. He sees that they feel at home ; that they are ready to welcome him. If his period lies towards the end of the day and they look tired or bored—he tries to give them some mental pick-me-up. He places all the material that he has brought with him near at hand so that it should be used at a moment's notice when required. He sees that the black-board is clean and the students have their things before them.

The Lesson :—The lesson is generally divided into 3 parts viz. (*a*) Introduction. (*b*) Body of the lesson and (*c*) Fixation.

(*a*) *Introduction* :—It is always useful to begin by asking a question. It may be from the previous lesson or picture or model shown to the class. Sometimes the answer can serve as a good 'jumping ground' to reach the main topic of the new lesson. I, however, desire to warn my readers against an exaggeration of the item called *elicitation*. It is not always possible to begin with questions. There are no hard and fast rules that you must use the process of elicitation. The underlying idea is that an attempt should be made to enlist the students' active co-operation. The students' present knowledge may better be utilized to deal with a fresh topic. Due care should be taken that the introduction is short and takes not more than an average of five minutes. Its purpose is only to arouse the interest and the curiosity of the students. The merging of the introduction into the body of the lesson should be gradual and not abrupt.

(*b*) *Body of the lesson* :—It is always useful to divide the lesson into suitable units and to deal with each according to its importance in relation to main topic. When a unit has been thoroughly dealt with the teacher will do well in making sure that the students have followed what they have been taught and the best way to do it is to ask recapitulatory questions at the end of every unit. The teacher should not proceed further unless and until he is sure that the class has been keeping pace with him. A good teacher always develops the students' answers into what we often call a Blackboard Summary.

Except in lessons when there is no other alternative mere narration, explanation or exposition by the teacher, is not a very healthy practice, at least in the junior and the middle school stages. Children must be kept alert, active and interested. At no time during the lesson, the students should be made to feel that the teacher is going away from them. The students should be made to feel that

they are active participants in what is happening, they will lend you their co-operation only if they have proper amount of *interest* in the proceedings.

What is interest? And how is it created? A very important question that has to be discussed at this stage! Mind may be called a *machine* and a machine only works if there is a sufficient amount of motive force present to make it go. That motive force for the purpose of education is *interest*. Unless *interest* is evoked, there can't be any *learning*. Sometimes during my teaching I have felt the necessity of introducing irrelevant matter to arouse and keep up the interest in the class because if I fail to do it, I have done no teaching: it has merely been a period of idle talk and gossip. A monotonous preacher-like style always sends one's audience to sleep. The teacher's voice should show his enthusiasm in the lesson. I always prefer a couple of smiles, and even laughs during a lesson. You should look pleasant and happy. Don't be grim, if you can help it.

The question of illustrations is a very important one. Illustrations can be *verbal* or *concrete*, which one to use at what time can be best decided by the teacher himself. Whatever may be your choice, see that every illustration serves some definite purpose and has its place in the body of the lesson. Some teachers are rather overfond of illustrations. A tale is told when there is no need for it. I have very often seen teachers showing pictures that serve no useful purpose. Again your picture or story should not tell too much. It should only set a pupil's imagination to work. The selection of proper illustrations is an art that only experience can teach. The last point in this connection is a word of caution: "See that your lesson does not become all illustrations".

(c) *End of the lesson or fixation*:—The end of the lesson should invariably be a process of revision. "Now what all this comes to" or "What have we learnt?" Should be the concluding aims. Some people prefer to develop the black-board summary at this stage by means of questions and answers. I personally feel that to review the whole

lesson all at once may not be very useful. Students can digest bit by bit better. Moreover the summary may become too lengthy.

Points to be paid attention to during the lesson:—

(1) *Personal Hygiene and students' postures.*

(2) *Discipline* :— Enough has been said on this in a previous chapter. It should never be slack. Good discipline is a natural result of good teaching. It can never be imposed from without. The teacher's personality and his character play a very important role. A lot of patience and sweetness of temper in the teacher is essential.

There is nothing like a second-hand discipline. "Sit down and do your work, otherwise I shall report you to the Headmaster," are words used only by bad teachers who lack personality and tact. What is the teacher there for ?

It is always useful for the teacher to cultivate a certain reserve and do away with all frivolousness. He should stand and work with authority and dignity. But he should not in any case try to be pompous. The students' respect for you should be inborn. They should regard you as a man of superior knowledge without your telling them. To be humorous is good but only in limited dozes. Students are always strange *animals*, too much liberty might spoil them.

(3) *Teacher's voice and movements* :— Both should be under control. You have a class of thirty to thirty-five children and it is your business to cater to their needs. Vigorous movements are as objectionable as sitting like a statue or sitting on the table like a *sadhu*. Acting in any form does not appeal to me because that often makes a teacher look ridiculous and there is a danger of the class-discipline getting slack.

Voice is a teacher's most valuable tool, all others come after this. It should neither have the sing-song monotony of a preacher nor the brilliance of a platform orator. It should have proper modulations which a teacher can easily practice in the beginning of his career. Every word should

be spoken separately and distinctly so that all may understand him. Reading of prose and poetry should be practised because both require a different type of modulation. In short his articulation should be correct and his speech quite clear.

(4) *Questioning* :— To ask questions seems, at the face of it at least, a very simple affair. But an experienced teacher thinks otherwise. It is an *art*. The following points may be useful guidance :—

(a) The questions should be explicit and unambiguous.

(b) They should be brief and expressed in simple language.

(c) They should not as a rule suggest answers.

(d) Elliptical questions should be avoided *i.e.*, questions put in the form that only requires a missing word to be inserted e.g. "The capital of India is.........?"

(e) Courtesy is always desirable when putting questions.

(f) Too many questions should not be asked.

(g) It is better to ask only those questions whose answers your students are expected to know.

(h) Questions should be uniformly distributed amongst all the members of the class. It is always useful to ask students not to raise their hands if they know the answers because some are rather shy to declare their *ability*.

(5) *Treatment of students' answers* :—

They may be classified as (1) correct (2) incomplete (3) partly correct but omitting some important fact (4) wrong but intelligent (5) wrong (6) hopelessly wrong and (7) ridiculous and mischievous (This is very rare).

It is pedantic to insist on complete-sentence answers. Answers should never be accepted in chorus. Don't grudge some prompting it a very intelligent answer is expected. If the answers are hopelessly wrong, the teacher should revise his method of teaching as well as his mode of questioning. Ridiculous and mischievous answer must be severely dealt with. Students' answers if properly studied lead to considerable improvement in a teacher's work.

Second and third types of answers indicate faulty emphasis or timing or even a mistaken adjustment to the capabilities of the children. The fourth type proves that the facts have not been learnt properly as the teacher went too fast, though the relations between them were probably understood.

(6) *Students' questions* :— Opinions differ as to the desirability of such a thing as allowing students to put questions in the class during or after the lesson. I personally feel that they may be allowed if the questions are likely to help the students to learn. Foolish and irrelevant questions may be answered by a pleasant smile or in extreme and intentional cases by a stern rebuff. It may be a better practice to allow questions during revision of units.

( ) *Black-board work* :— The black-board has to serve a definite purpose. I very much doubt the existence of any school lesson where this important instrument of teaching is not resorted to. On the other hand, there may be in some teachers a tendency to exaggerate the use of it—"a teachers work should not be all *talk*, neither should it be all *chalk*". The first point to be remembered is that the board should be in a suitable position so that all the members of the class may be able to see it closely. In order to write legibly and nicely on the Board, one requires a fair amount of practice and it should form an important part of a teacher's training. Drawing figures and sketch-maps also require practice. The writing on the Board should be of a large scale.

Your standing position when you write on the board is also worth your attention. You should stand as not to cover the Board for if you do so the pupils will be sitting idle and more time will be wasted when they copy the work in their note-books later on. It is always useful to speak, what you write and as you write. It helps in maintaining the discipline if you occasionally look back at the class while writing on the Board.

(8) *Eye-control* :— A good teacher can use his eyes in maintaining the control in the class. Much can be read from our eyes. A teacher's eye should be able to detect

any wrong doing and the children must know that their teacher's eye is on them. If a boy is behaving rather improperly, your eye should be able to tell him that you don't like it and if he does it again, he will be severely dealt with. While putting a question, you first put it to the whole class and then you may interrogate the individual. But eyes should not always show 'terror', they should also depict sympathy, kindness and fellow-feeling. Dewey in his *Essentials of Teaching* speaks highly about the eye of the teacher: "It carries its message surely, silently, even secretly, to each individual concerned, without a moment's interruption of the lesson, with the rapidity of the electric telegraph and with at least the plainness of the spoken word". (Davis, 'The young teacher's primer' p 21). *But for all this your eye must be trained.*

(9) *Students' written-work* :— When the students write in the class, you should pay attention to their postures. See that they write steadily and neatly and do not scribble or write in pencil. Some students are in the habit of speaking while they write; see that they leave this habit. Some students are so expert in *fooling* the teacher. You can always see their pens moving but they are not writing and are talking to their neighbours in whispers. A strict and active supervision is needed. You may occasionally go to the individual students and see what they are doing. It is not a good practice to occupy yourself in filling up your registers or just dozing in your chair while the students are doing their writing.

(10) The teacher should know his class not only as a class but also as individuals. He should know all his pupils by name and should be able to recognise them by their voices. It is always useful to remember and apply what his Training College told him about child psychology.

(11) *Home-work* :— The purpose of home work is to give a student chance to do some individual study or writing according to his or her own whim, convenience and capacity

It is not necessary that it should be done only at home. Spare periods could be utilized for this purpose. Homework

should never be excessive in quantity. It should be more for subjects like arithmetic where a lot of practice is needed. It may also comprise preparation for the next lesson. It should always be valued. It is always useful to have a homework Time-Table. The teacher should ascertain that the pupils have taken no illegetimate help at home. Parents may co-operate and help in this work.

(12) The problem of *interest* deserves more mention. The power to learn depends on the will to learn. The attention and *absorption* should be involuntary. The creation and maintenance of this attention and absorption (or we may call it *interest*) is the central task of the teacher. It is very wrong to believe that interest is created. It already exists. A good teacher tries to nourish it and develop it. Our aim as teachers should be to encourage and let the students feel that they are achieving something, however, small it may be.

A teacher is the 'maker of a nation' and his work is sacred He should go into the spirit of his task cheerfully and zealously ; then he does good work for his pupils, for himself and for the society at large.

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